

CHAPTER 3

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS





Study Questions

- 1 What does it mean to be a professional?
- 2 What are the basic expectations for all employees in the restaurant and foodservice industry?
- 3 What is teamwork?
- 4 What are ethics, and why are they important to a business?
- 5 What is diversity, and what forces can negatively affect it in the workplace?
- 6 How do employees' roles and jobs impact a company's goals?
- 7 What are the steps for resigning from a job?



Key Terms

Professionalism

Professional image

Teamwork

Ethics

Workplace ethics

Diversity

Stereotypes

Prejudice

Bias

Cultural tendencies

Empathy

Feedback



INTRODUCTION

THE EXPECTATIONS OF AN
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INTRODUCTION

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL IN THE RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY? IT IS NOT SIMPLY ABOUT KNOWING HOW TO COOK OR TAKING GUESTS' ORDERS, ALTHOUGH THOSE SKILLS ARE OBVIOUSLY VERY IMPORTANT. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY ALL HAVE MANY CRITICAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES IN COMMON, REFLECTING THEIR COMMITMENT TO THEIR CAREERS AND THE INDUSTRY ITSELF. THESE BUILDING BLOCKS, WHICH YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT IN THIS CHAPTER, SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

THE EXPECTATIONS OF AN INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

Over the course of your career, you will acquire a wide variety of skills and interests. When you are first starting out, however, you must recognize what employers require from any employee—regardless of title or responsibility. All employees across the industry must meet some basic expectations to ensure that restaurant and foodservice operations are successful from day to day. If you are just entering the workforce, meeting these expectations will help you gain credibility and respect from your coworkers and managers. Once you are a manager yourself, you will see the value of these qualities in the people on your team.

In total, these are the qualities and expectations that define what it means to be a professional. **Professionalism** is the combination of trained skills, polite and positive behaviors, and good judgment a person uses at work.



DID YOU KNOW

About Calottes and Toques

The chef's hat, also called a toque, dates back to the sixteenth century and is the crowning element of the traditional uniform. The more experience a chef has, the more pleats in the hat. Throughout history, the chef's hat has been a symbol of authority and knowledge. Most chefs now wear a standard six- or nine-inch-high toque, but a cook's rank in the kitchen often dictates the type of hat he or she wears. Beginners wear flat-topped calottes; cooks with more advanced skills wear low toques; and the master chefs wear high toques.

Your Presence at Work

It all starts with showing up. The most basic requirement for any employee is to go to work according to the schedule that has been assigned. Being on time is equally important. People are depending on you to be there to help make the business successful. If you are not able to go to work because of illness or an emergency, or if you are running late, be sure to contact your manager before your shift begins.

Your appearance matters too. Remember that you will be working with food and people—preparing, serving, and removing food or greeting guests. In the restaurant and foodservice industry, cleanliness and neatness are absolutely essential. Employers expect employees to be clean and neat in their appearance every day on the job. This covers everything from clean nails and hands to washed hair. Clean, well-maintained, and ironed uniforms are also required, whether you are in the front or back of the house. All of this together comprises your **professional image**.

Traditionally, cooks and chefs wear the following:

- Comfortable leather shoes that are polished and kitchen safe (with nonskid soles and closed toes)
- Trousers (either solid white, solid black, black-and-white checked, or black-and-white striped) that are hemmed and fit appropriately, possibly with a belt
- Clean, ironed, white double-breasted jacket
- Clean, ironed apron
- Clean neckerchief, usually knotted or tied cravat style
- Hat or toque

Front-of-the-house uniforms vary according to the operation. Servers, for example, often wear polo shirts or button-down shirts with ties. Hosts and hostesses may be required to dress according to a specific color scheme or have a uniform themselves. Jewelry and other accessories may also be limited. Nevertheless, all front-of-the-house employees must also be sure to wear clean, ironed clothing that reflects the company's dress code. **Figure 3.1** shows examples of uniforms for front- and back-of-the-house staff.



Figure 3.1: Front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house staff uniforms.



VIDEO

The Professional Image

For a video on the professional image, please go to: Textbooks.Restaurant.org/Videos.



INDUSTRY

Emotional Skills

Danny Meyer, a famous restaurateur, says that he looks for a combination of technical skills and “innate hospitality skills” when he interviews prospective employees. These emotional skills include kindness and optimism, intellectual curiosity, work ethic, empathy and self-awareness, and integrity.

Your Attitude at Work

Have you ever approached a test or homework assignment with dread? At best, you probably felt relief once the experience was over, rather than pleased with your performance. Work tasks are similar. How you approach your work mentally affects both how you think of the work and how you are perceived by the people around you.

People with positive attitudes are more likely to be positive around guests and coworkers. Remaining upbeat and calm can help you work through difficult tasks and busy times. And taking a flexible approach, such as showing a willingness to jump in to clean dishes or help at the host stand, is also key to helping yourself meet new challenges and learn new skills.

In total, the attitude you present at work reflects the respect you give yourself, your work, and other people. You can use it to your advantage, no matter the task in front of you.

Your Actions at Work

You have probably heard the saying, “Actions speak louder than words.” The actions that employees and managers take in the workplace show people a lot about who they are and what they value.

The most valued employees in a restaurant or foodservice operation are able to work well with others while taking responsibility for their individual results. You will work with many types of people in the restaurant world, each with his or her own contribution to make to a business’s success. With respect for others, some basic communication skills, and a strong commitment to your work, you will be able to make good decisions for the team and for yourself.

Teamwork

In the restaurant and foodservice industry, no one person can make an operation run well. It takes a team of professionals. Throughout your time in this industry, you will work on many types of teams.

You have probably had plenty of chances to work on a team—maybe in class as a part of a project or as a member of a sports team. Do you remember a time when you tried to accomplish a task by yourself, only to realize you needed the help of a friend, classmate, or coworker? Chances are the two of you finished the task more efficiently than by doing it alone.

In the same way, teams, as shown in [Figure 3.2](#), form the basic work structure for restaurant and foodservice operations. For example, the kitchen team works together to make the food. One person does not make each dish from prepping to garnishing. The servers work with the hosts and busers to keep things moving smoothly in the front of the house.



Figure 3.2: Team members from the front and back of the house.

Teamwork uses each team member's strengths so the group has more success working together than working alone. The most successful teams respect each other's opinions and find ways to work together to create positive results.

People on successful teams are more likely to feel a responsibility to the other team members. Why? Because a team is a group of individuals with different skills and experience levels, but they are all working to complete the task or meet the goal. Often, the people doing the work have a better understanding of where breakdowns might happen, and they can build a solution together.

Personal Responsibility

Performing tasks correctly is another fundamental aspect of a job. You have the responsibility to follow the directions for the tasks you have been assigned. You also must complete those tasks in the time frame your manager has assigned.

In some cases, you may realize that you have an obstacle to completing a task. Maybe you need to help the busload of guests that just came in before you can clean tables, or perhaps you have not yet been trained on how to use a new piece of equipment. Regardless of the reason, you are still accountable for the work that your manager assigned. So what can you do? The answer is simpler than you might think: communicate. By communicating frequently and clearly, you give your coworkers and managers the opportunity to help you remove obstacles so that you can complete your work. See [Figure 3.3](#).

Ethics

As an employee, you will also be expected to follow the code of conduct for your company. These codes often cover a wide range of topics, including decision making, dress code, and standards for behavior. Most companies have a written code that is rooted in the ethics of its leaders. **Ethics** are a set of moral values that a group of people holds. They are typically based on the principles of honesty, integrity, and respect for others. They can be influenced by cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, personal codes of conduct, and individual experiences. They help guide the decisions people make, sometimes whether they realize it or not.

In the business world, **workplace ethics** set the professional tone and behaviors for employees in an operation. These codes help everyone understand what is considered acceptable or unacceptable behavior.



Figure 3.3: A manager communicating with an employee.



DID YOU KNOW

The Culinarian's Code

The American Culinary Federation, which works to help culinary professionals grow their knowledge and skills, has a code of conduct for its members. It is known as the Culinarian's Code. It outlines the four areas of responsibility for a culinary professional: to themselves, to coworkers, to the business, and to guests. It summarizes the expectations that many of today's culinary leaders have for themselves and the other professionals in this industry.



KNOWLEDGE CHECK

- 1 What is professionalism?
- 2 What are ethics?
- 3 What are the advantages of teamwork?

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Figure 3.4: A diverse group of upcoming foodservice professionals.

YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

The other primary set of expectations that any employee of the restaurant and foodservice industry must meet relates to the treatment of and interaction with fellow employees. You have already read that a positive, courteous attitude is important and can affect how people see you at work. These other behaviors have an equally strong—and more direct—ability to shape the perceptions that people have of you. Put simply, the way you treat others will make or break your likelihood of success in this industry.

Workplace Diversity

With millions of employees across the country, the restaurant and foodservice industry is a tremendously diverse environment. **Diversity** refers to the great variety of people in today's world and their backgrounds, experiences, opinions, religions, ages, talents, and abilities. See [Figure 3.4](#).

As a member of this dynamic community, you will be expected to respect the differences of your coworkers and guests. The benefits are undeniable—a more pleasant work environment, stronger relationships, and more success for the entire team. So it is worth spending some time on understanding the forces that can work against diversity.

Stereotypes and Prejudices

Stereotypes are generalizations that individuals make about particular groups. These generalizations assume that all members of that group are the same. Stereotypes are hard to change because they are usually not based on actual experience. All people are hurt by stereotyping—those who are being labeled and those who think the labels are true. People who believe in stereotypes—either positive or negative—are cheated out of genuine relationships with people. This will cloud their personal and business judgment in untold ways.

Stereotypes produce prejudice and bias. **Prejudice** is a general attitude toward a person, group, or organization on the basis of judgments that are unrelated to abilities. Some people are brought up in an environment where they learn to like certain people and groups and dislike others. Prejudice can come from personal experience, lessons from adults and family, and media representations.

Bias is a tendency toward a particular perspective or idea based on prejudice.

On the other hand, many groups of people do have common beliefs, such as religion, or share common ways of acting. These groups have **cultural tendencies** to do some things based on their beliefs and their habits. In contrast, stereotypes do not distinguish between what a group of people may tend to do or believe and what an individual actually does or believes.

Smart restaurant and foodservice managers understand the value of overcoming stereotypes and biases.



DID YOU KNOW

Who Works in the Industry?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, there are over 8.1 million people employed in food preparation and serving occupations, including the following percentages of women and minorities: 54.5 percent women, 13.8 percent black/African American, 6.1 percent Asian, and 25.3 percent Hispanic/Latino.

Showing Empathy

You already know about the need to communicate in this industry. Teams talk to each other, and service staff talk frequently to guests. Your ability to connect with people by listening and showing understanding is another critical skill for an industry employee.

Empathy is the act of identifying with the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. Empathetic individuals put others at ease with nonjudgmental acceptance. Often it is referred to as “standing in someone else’s shoes.” You cannot always connect with another person’s feelings simply by acknowledging them verbally. For example:

Employee to manager: “Sam called in sick again today. He’s been out a lot lately. It’s been hard on all of us!”

Manager to employee: “I know that it’s been tough on you and the rest of the team. I appreciate that you’ve all been pitching in to keep everything running smoothly. I’m working on this situation so that it won’t continue to be a problem.”

In this scenario, the manager acknowledged the employee’s feelings and made it clear that she understood how difficult the situation was. The manager showed empathy for the employee’s frustration.

By using empathic statements in your communication with other people at work, you have the chance to show genuine concern about the people you work with and an understanding of their needs and feelings. This communication and understanding can help ensure you are able to connect with your coworkers in a positive way. This will help you build trust and respect with others—a particularly important skill once you become a manager who is responsible for building strong teams.

Feedback

Throughout our lives, we all receive input on the success and impact of our actions and attitudes. At school, for example, your report cards, awards, comments on essays, and coaching advice are all forms of feedback. Essentially, **feedback** is helpful information that is given to someone to say what is working or needs to be improved about a particular action or performance.

Feedback is the primary tool that managers use to help employees understand what they are doing correctly and incorrectly in their jobs. Sometimes, feedback might be quick and verbal. For example, “Shanna, you should not be wearing ripped gloves. Please go change them immediately.” Other times, you will participate in more formal performance evaluations and discussions (see [Figure 3.5](#)).



VIDEO

Feedback

For a video on feedback, please go to: Textbooks.Restaurant.org/Videos.



INDUSTRY

Diversity Is Good for the Operation

According to a study conducted by *Nation’s Restaurant News*, TDn2K, and the Multicultural Foodservice and Hospitality Alliance, there are beneficial reasons for restaurant and foodservice operations to focus on increasing the diversity of their workforce.

These include:

- Attracting younger consumers who expect to see diversity in their workplaces and prefer to patronize operations that show that.
- United States demographics are changing, and non-white consumers have growing purchasing power.
- Companies that have diversity statements have lower staff turnover. They report 19 percent less turnover among hourly employees and 7 percent less turnover among managers.



Figure 3.5: A manager giving an employee her performance evaluation.



Figure 3.6: A manager giving positive feedback.

Ideally, feedback is not just about what is wrong. Strong managers provide continuous feedback and make sure to include positive feedback as well. For example, “Shanna, great job getting all the orders out during our lunch rush so quickly! I appreciate your hard work.” See [Figure 3.6](#).

Either way, you must be prepared to handle both the praise and the criticism that will come your way. As an employee, you must be able to accept and learn from the feedback that you receive. Your ability to act upon the feedback—by either continuing to perform well or making adjustments to your performance—will make the difference in your ability to learn and grow.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS BASIC EXPECTATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES



Figure 3.7: Cooks calmly listen while their head chef offers feedback.

As you have learned throughout this chapter, all of the industry’s employees—from entry level through general manager—are expected to meet these critical requirements for work behavior.

- 1 Go to work when you are scheduled and arrive on time.
- 2 Maintain personal hygiene and grooming.
- 3 Be positive.
- 4 Be courteous and calm.
- 5 Be flexible.
- 6 Work as a part of a team.
- 7 Complete the work assigned to you.
- 8 Communicate clearly and frequently.
- 9 Respect the differences of others.
- 10 Show empathy for the needs and feelings of others.
- 11 Accept and learn from feedback (see [Figure 3.7](#)).

By embracing these expectations, you have the opportunity to be successful from your first day on the job and serve as a role model for your teammates. You will also have an advantage in understanding what managers look for and seek to promote in their staff.

YOUR ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF AN ORGANIZATION

As you begin your career, perhaps in an entry-level role as a dish washer or a host, it can sometimes be difficult to understand how the work you do every day affects your company's larger picture. But the truth is that every employee of a company, particularly in a service industry like ours, has a direct impact on the company's success.

Many companies lay out the goals for their business so that the public and their employees can understand what the company strives to achieve. They often do this through official mission statements. A mission statement basically states what a company is trying to do. For example, The Cheesecake Factory's mission is "to create an environment where absolute guest satisfaction is our highest priority."

Can you envision how a hostess might affect guest satisfaction? Or how a dish washer's work could? Every employee at a restaurant has a role to play in embodying the mission of the company. A mission statement is nothing if employees are not acting on it. As you gain more responsibility, you will also be expected to help employees on your team to see their impact on the company's success—and provide them with the tools and empowerment to live up to those goals.

RESIGNING FROM A JOB

What happens if it just does not work? Most people eventually leave a job because of a better opportunity, change in school schedule, or any number of other reasons. Well, there are expectations of how a professional handles this situation.

Give a current employer two weeks' notice before leaving. It is standard business practice. Inform him or her in person, or write a letter of resignation. Do not resign in an email. This is a serious and formal process.

Take care in writing a letter of resignation. Include the reasons for leaving, but always be polite. Avoid any negative comments, and always thank the employer for providing the opportunity. As learned when filling out a job application, prospective employers ask about work records and request references from previous employers. Showing negativity when resigning might ruin future opportunities.

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INDUSTRY

Living the Mission

The mission at Morton's The Steakhouse is, "...to always exceed our guests' expectations. As we succeed, we expand our reputation as the World's Best Steakhouse."

A few years ago, a frequent customer of Morton's tweeted from his seat on a flight to Newark, New Jersey, "Hey @Mortons—can you meet me at newark airport with a porterhouse when I land in two hours? K, thanks." The man was obviously joking, but Morton's took it seriously. When he landed, the man was greeted by a server in a tux from the nearest Morton's (23 miles away), holding a bag with a complete steak and shrimp dinner, including napkins and utensils.

The Internet lit up with praise and excitement about the company. None of this would have happened, though, if Morton's employees did not feel empowered to make unusual decisions to please their guests. They live the company's mission.

Figure 3.8 is an example of a resignation letter.



Figure 3.8: Sample resignation letter.

A good guide to follow throughout your working career is to always leave on a positive note. Keep long-term goals in mind, and rise above any negative words and attitudes of others. Have the patience and persistence to see a career vision to its ultimate goal. Possessing excellent skills and having a good education and training are only part of the equation for a successful career in the restaurant and foodservice industry; successful employees also need commitment to service, a positive attitude, and perseverance to get to the top.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

- 1 What do managers use feedback for?
- 2 What are the steps to resigning from a job?
- 3 What type of attitude should an employee have at the job?
- 4 What is the difference between a stereotype and a cultural tendency?

SUMMARY

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- Professionalism is the combination of trained skills, polite and positive behaviors, and good judgment a person uses at work.
- The most basic requirement for any employee is to go to work according to the schedule that has been assigned. Being on time is equally important, in the correct, clean clothing.
- People with positive attitudes are more likely to be positive around guests and coworkers. Remaining upbeat and calm can help you work through difficult tasks and busy times.
- Teamwork uses each team member's strengths so the group has more success working together than an individual would have working alone.
- Employees have the responsibility to follow the directions for the tasks they have been assigned. They also must complete those tasks in the time frame their manager has assigned.
- Ethics are a set of moral values that a society holds that are influenced by cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, and individual experiences.
- Diversity in the workplace creates a more enjoyable and productive environment.
- Stereotypes are generalizations that individuals make about particular groups that assume that all members of the group are the same. Prejudice is a general attitude toward a person, group, or organization on the basis of judgments unrelated to abilities. Bias is a tendency toward a particular perspective or idea based on prejudice.
- Empathy is the act of identifying with the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. Empathetic individuals put others at ease with nonjudgmental acceptance.
- All employees have a stake in the success of a company—no matter their position or tenure.
- When resigning from a job, inform your employer in person or in a letter of resignation. Standard practice is to give your current employer two weeks' notice.



CASE STUDY FOLLOW-UP

Refer back to the unit-opening case study, and answer these questions.

- Question 1:** Michele calls a Salvatore's staff meeting to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the staff working as a team. List three advantages and three disadvantages of working as a team.
- Question 2:** The staff at Salvatore's Restaurant is diverse. What are the benefits of having a diverse staff?

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: What Makes a Professional?

Based on the details in this chapter, tell us in your own words what makes a professional employee in the workplace. Use the details and facts outlined in this chapter to support your statements.

Science: Impact of Teamwork

Observe your classmates in the next group project. Do you see any impact of teamwork? Or maybe there is an impact due to the lack of teamwork? Write a summary about what you observed.

Math: Counting on Diversity

To practice your understanding of a diverse work group, do a small diversity math problem. How many total students are in your class? How many students in your class have light-colored hair (blonde, light brown, or red)? How many students in your class have dark-colored hair (dark brown or black)? Divide the number of students with light-colored hair or dark-colored hair by the total number of students to find the percentage of hair-color diversity in the class.

Collaboration: Classroom Code

Get together in a group, and make a list of the guiding principles that you believe the class should honor. If your school already has a code of conduct, use this as a starting point. Identify those areas that you do not believe are addressed or could be expanded.

Career Readiness: Having a Mission

Research companies in your area; look at their mission statements. Is there anything about the companies that would make you want to work there? When looking for employment or a potential career it is important to connect with the business or employer. If you find a company you really connect with, consider applying. You can set up an interview with someone in Human Resources and ask questions about their mission or vision statements.

Critical Thinking: Primary Expectation

Review the list of basic expectations that are valued by employers in the restaurant and foodservice industry, found in the Essential Skills feature in this chapter. Choose the expectation that you believe is the most critical for employees in the industry, and explain why you selected it.

EXAM PREP QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the best way for an employee to inform an employer that he or she is resigning?
 - A Walk into the employer's office to say goodbye.
 - B Write a letter of resignation listing the reasons for leaving.
 - C Leave a message for the employer with a two-day notice.
 - D Write a thank-you note to the employer for the experience.
- 2 The variety of people and their backgrounds, experiences, opinions, and abilities is known as
 - A diversity.
 - B principles.
 - C prejudices.
 - D modeling.
- 3 Generalizations that individuals make about particular groups that assume all members of that group are the same are called
 - A diversity.
 - B principles.
 - C prejudices.
 - D stereotypes.
- 4 The helpful information that a person receives about his or her actions or performance is known as
 - A feedback.
 - B empathy.
 - C motivation.
 - D professionalism.
- 5 A set of moral values that a society holds is called
 - A ethics.
 - B ideals.
 - C objectives.
 - D beliefs.
- 6 Why is teamwork valuable?
 - A Team members can learn from each other.
 - B Communication is not needed.
 - C Team members can let others do the work.
 - D Decisions take longer.
- 7 All employees of the restaurant and foodservice industry must bring what type of attitude to their work?
 - A Casual
 - B Biased
 - C Positive
 - D Defensive
- 8 How much notice should a resignation letter include?
 - A 1 week
 - B 2 weeks
 - C 3 weeks
 - D 4 weeks
- 9 A chef's traditional uniform includes
 - A fitted gloves.
 - B nonskid shoes.
 - C a baseball cap.
 - D a wristwatch.
- 10 A general attitude toward a person, group, or organization on the basis of judgments unrelated to abilities is called
 - A stereotypes.
 - B bias.
 - C diversity.
 - D prejudice.