Professionalism DOs and DON’Ts
Advice for Physicians Entering the Business World

As you venture out in the world and develop your navigation and domain skills, as you network, and as you do your research, always act PROFESSIONALLY. This advice would seem unnecessary and almost trite, if it were not that many physicians so often act UNprofessionally. Your title of MD does not by itself grant you “professionalism.” In order to be successful in your career transition you must exhibit the basic courtesies, dress and demeanor of an executive who can be trusted with a decision maker’s business, money, customers and project teams.

Top 15 Professionalism DO’s

1. Keep meetings and appointments
2. Arrive at meetings on time or early
3. Listen before speaking
4. Return phone calls within 8 hours
5. Reply to email within 24 hours
6. Be brief and to the point
7. Say thank you and send hand written thank you notes
8. Smile and be pleasant when engaged in conversation
9. Wear tasteful jewelry and/or watch
10. Use professionally printed business letterhead and business cards
11. Have a separate business phone number and business email
12. Use proper table etiquette when eating
13. Dress in a well-fitting business suit when meeting decision makers
14. For men: Keep beard and mustache neatly trimmed
15. For women: Tasteful make-up and hair color (And yes, some color is necessary!)
Top Ten Professional DON'Ts

1. Smoke in the presence of others or before a meeting
2. Use foul language
3. Make sexist or racist remarks
4. Gossip or share confidential information
5. Tell crude jokes, even if a contact does
6. Answer or talk on your cell phone just prior to or during a networking meeting or interview (JUST TURN IT OFF!)
7. Wear perfume or cologne during business meetings or events
8. Wear excess makeup or jewelry; AND no jangling jewelry for women; no gold neck chains for men; no glaring religious symbols
9. Express your views in a way that embarrasses another person
10. Talk or act rudely to assistants, secretaries, receptionists or clerks