

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

Vol. 1 | Issue 2 | Fall 2017

Professionalism in Action

More than a decade after we made the Code of Excellence a priority, it is being used in every branch and every district of the IBEW.

The Code is a declaration of the core values—safety, professionalism, accountability, relationships and quality—that have driven our union for more than 125 years and will build our future in the 21st century.

Our members do a variety of jobs, from linemen to aerospace engineers to lawyers to custodians. It would be easy to focus on getting the job done “correctly” and think that speaks for itself.

But we’re the IBEW. Competence in our work is the minimum to get on the field; excellence is how we win the game.

One of the difference makers is the second value: professionalism.

A 2015 Angie’s List member survey showed that when customers expressed dissatisfaction, 80 percent of the time, their complaint was a lack of professionalism.

Professionalism is independent of the job title or the individual assignment. It is how we show up on the job: our attitude, our dress and the language we use.



Implementing the Code doesn’t mean labor will always agree with management, but our professional attitude paves the way for a solutions-driven outcome.

What it does mean is that we can identify and solve problems in a timely and professional manner.

There is plenty of evidence that valuing cooperation, customer service and effective communication pay off. In Las Vegas at NV Energy, the professionalism of the utility workers at Local 396 is leading to work for the construction members at Local 357.

Local 396 President Shannon Skinner has worked for the company for nearly 25 years. She’s noticed a change for the better since the Code of Excellence was implemented.

“I think it’s mutual respect,” she said. “We work together and we have a common goal, to serve our customers here in Nevada in a productive manner. We’re professionals, they’re professionals. When we work together, it

just doesn’t get any better.”

What we’re doing with the Code isn’t just about making this workplace or that workplace better.

We’re proving in practice that we can build a different kind of economy that says employers and unions are partners in prosperity.

“The Code of Excellence is a reminder the IBEW has the best workforce anywhere, and we back that up,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “To see an industry leader like NV Energy wholeheartedly embrace it is extremely gratifying, and we hope it convinces other utility companies to do the same.”

Employers hire the IBEW because they know every one of us is competent to get the job done; they hire us again and again when they see that we get it done with professionalism.

What does professionalism do for your branch? Turn the page to find out.



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



The Face of the Company—and the IBEW

As IBEW utility workers, we're not just representatives of the Brotherhood, we're also the face of the company we work for. For many customers, we may be the only person they see from their power company. That's why professionalism is so important. What we do, how well we do it and how we present ourselves all reflects on our employers as well as the IBEW.

Our interactions with customers and employers resonate far past any one exchange. They form the impression people have of not just us, but our co-workers, our employers and our union. At all times, we must make professionalism part of our job. That means doing the job correctly and following all safety and work procedures. It also means showing up every day on time and ready to work and treating our co-workers and customers with respect.

Professionalism is how we move from simply doing our jobs to performing at the highest level possible. This goes for everyone, regardless of title. Whether we're dealing with management at a power plant or customers while reading their meter, every encounter deserves our full and sincere attention. This is how we demonstrate that we really are the finest workforce around.

We do our jobs under some truly daunting circumstances. When most people are at home during a storm, we're out on the roads repairing the downed lines. When hundreds, if not thousands, of calls come in after a storm, we're the voices people hear. It's not easy work. It can try the most patient and seasoned members among us. But we rise to the challenge. That's what professionalism looks like, and that's why we're the best in the business.



SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Eaton is the first manufacturing company to attach an IBEW Code of Excellence sticker to its products. The program is a partnership with Local 3, which has 45 members working at the Hicksville facility.



Positive changes brought by the Code of Excellence led to System Council U-4 and Florida Power & Light winning a national award for its service reliability, which exceeded 99.98 percent.