

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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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



Practicing Professionalism and Positivity

There are words we use to describe things that are difficult to define—words such as good taste and leadership. Like professionalism, they're subject to opinions and interpretations. But if you ask someone to define professionalism, they'll tell you, "I'll know it when I see it." That's why IBEW members hold up the value of professionalism in everything we do.

Showing up to work on time ready to give it our best, treating managers and co-workers with respect and taking responsibility for our words and actions—these are just some of the ways we demonstrate professionalism in the workplace.

Looking the part of a professional is important as well to our Code of Excellence. In the manufacturing industry, clothing or tattoos that might offend someone are covered up while on the clock. Using good judgement allows us to portray ourselves as the professionals that we are.

Perhaps most importantly, professionalism is about our attitude at work. A negative attitude by one member of the team can infect the entire group, so it's on us to make sure we're not the carriers of negativity. If we have a disagreement on the job, we have union representatives who are there to help us resolve them. Professionalism says that we



work to prevent disagreements, and when they occur, we work to resolve them in a manner that doesn't negatively impact the work environment or the people in it.

When we come to work with a positive attitude, that's infectious as well—both with our co-workers and with management.

If we act professionally and follow the Code of Excellence, we find solutions to problems more easily, and that can positively impact our workday and overall work experience.

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.