

Profanity And The Professional

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Several months ago I attended a training session put on by one of the world's leading "salesmen". The course was on how to sell your ideas. Surprisingly, most of the principles we learned were exactly the same as one would find in a course on selling encyclopaedias or computers. I learned a lot from the course, but there was one point which really surprised me. It was the general consensus of the students and an emphatic point from the instructor that the use of profanity is still a big no-no.

In the land surveying profession we deal with many other professions, including engineers, contractors, architects and developers. It would seem the norm that all these groups "cuss like sailors". The interesting point of some studies done on this subject was that even people who regularly use profanity are offended by someone who uses it in a professional atmosphere. In the 1980s we seem to be liberalizing our thoughts on this subject, to the point that even public meetings of associations or other professional groups are very willing to allow blatant profanity.

In spite of the "trend" in society, it is this writer's opinion that such habits are very unprofessional. Certain standards of conduct must be maintained as a respect and courtesy to those around us. I certainly am not trying to dictate to anyone how to conduct their own life, but rather pointing out the fact that a professional of any sort should be aware of his audience or environment and act accordingly.

We are constantly bombarded with articles and speeches about being a professional. Wearing a coat and tie to certain occasions is often cited. Having an office that is neat and organized or having professional appearing plats are other examples. I agree with these wholeheartedly. So let's add another to the list: AVOIDING PROFANITY IN THE WORK PLACE AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS.

There is no law against the Professional Land Surveyor being a scholar *and* a gentleman: both these terms add up to being a professional.

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