

It is hard to feel like a **professional** when you are working on the ramp on a cold and rainy night with the rain running down your neck. You've dropped a wrench just as the crew chief leans out a truck window and asks what is taking you so long. What you would like to say at that very moment can't be printed but this is when you have to remind yourself that you are a professional and "bite your tongue."

Are **we really professionals?** Let's start with where the word "Professional" comes from. It comes from the latin word, "professus" and was used in the Christian world in approximately the 13th century. "To profess" means to take a vow, oath or promise I.e. As a monk professing to live the ideals of the religious order to the highest standards for the good of the public. While the word has evolved past just the religious right, it still infers a high standard of ethics and working in the public's interest.

Just what is a professional? The dictionary says, " a person who has acquired specialized knowledge that lives and is guided by a specific code of ethics". At the top of the professional list are doctors whom take a modernized version of the "Hippocratic Oath" (which originated in approx. the 4th century BC and is among many ethics promises) which states to do no harm to the patient. Nurses are also included in this list as are engineers and somewhere down the list, even lawyers but sadly there are no AME's or AMT's on the list as they are considered a tradesmen or craftsmen and fall in the "blue collar" category. We do have a "Mechanic's Creed" written by Safety Professional, Jerome Lederer in 1941. I have a very faded copy of it still hanging on my hangar wall that was originally signed by myself on October 20th 1983 when the Pacific Aircraft Maintenance Engineers Association provided all their members

Mechanic's Creed

On My Honor I Promise that I shall hold in sacred trust the rights and privileges conferred upon me as a certified mechanic. Knowing full well that the Safety and lives of others are dependent upon my skill and judgment, I shall never knowingly subject others to risks which I would not be willing to assume for myself, or for those dear to me.

In Discharging this trust, I pledge myself never to undertake work or approve work which I feel to be beyond the limits of my knowledge, nor shall I allow any non-certified superior to persuade me to approve aircraft or equipment as airworthy against my better judgement, nor shall I permit my judgment to be influenced by money or other personal gain, no shall I pass as airworthy aircraft or equipment about which I am in doubt, either as a result of direct inspection or uncertainty regarding the ability of others who have worked on it to accomplish their work satisfactorily.

I Realize the grave responsibility which is mine as a certified airman, to exercise my judgment on the airworthiness of aircraft and equipment. I therefore, pledge unyielding adherence in these precepts for the advancement of aviation and for the dignity of my vocation.

Name _____

Licence No. _____

Dated this _____ day of _____ 201_

with copies. This should be our code of ethics however the title would have to be updated. By the way, A&P and AMT's could have been Aircraft Maintenance Engineers like the UK, Canada, Australia and others, but no, your ancestors had to go and have a Boston tea party way back in 1773.

Lets look at what makes a professional (in my humble opinion):



1. Has acquired specialized knowledge -

This is us as we have to have very specialized knowledge in airframes, engines, electrical systems, etc. on many different aircraft. We are tested for our knowledge and our license doesn't come out of a cracker jack box as it's not easy to earn. I've always said that given enough bananas, a monkey could be taught to fly (at least a simple simulator) but there aren't enough bananas in the world to train him to do a 100 hour inspection.



2. Acquire our status by accomplishment -

By this I mean you must also gain experience before you license is granted. In many countries this can take five years.



3. Bases our decisions on specialized knowledge, conformity to a standard and not on self interest -

We are required to always certify to an established standard. The FAR's and in Canada, CAR's, dictate just how we certify aeronautical products and if we include the Maintenance Control Manual you'll see we have a lot of standards we must conform to.



4. Are dedicated to quality workmanship -

I believe that the vast majority of us are very dedicated. We are well aware that lives can depend on our decisions and every AME/AMT that I've ever met would go to great lengths to ensure the job is done right.



5. Don't allow circumstances to sway our judgment from the correct course of action -

This can be a challenge when peer, management and self pressure wants to meet the designated departure time.(see the March Issue on pressure). The company places high importance in on time departures, but, not at the expense of Safety. Thus I believe we get a pass for this as well



6. Always do the right thing even when no one is watching -

I was the DOM of a one man AMO that maintained aircraft for private companies. I accidentally put a screwdriver into my right eye, covered it with a patch and finished the 100 hourly as the plane had a scheduled flight booked for the next morning. I almost lost my eye but never did it enter my mind to pencil whip the rest of the inspection or disappoint the customer by not finishing my job.



7. Belong to a voluntary association of fellow professionals -

This is one of our biggest weaknesses. Part of the reason for this can be

found in an article way back in the DOM March Issue of 2015 or #7 under DOM articles on our website - The Characteristics of an AME. In the article, Giselle, a close psychologist friend, recorded that we have a tendency to be loners.

I doubt if more than 10% of us belong to a professional AME/AMT organization. We need to do a lot better here.



8. Never accept the status quo but continuously strive to improve ourselves -

While I believe that we are getting better at this, all too often it is only because more things have been mandated. IA clinics and mandated recurrent training have helped improve ongoing training. That said, the quality of this training can often be called into question when a WW2 black and white video on care of batteries is shown while the beer is passed around. There is a wealth of information today on the internet and we have a responsibility as professionals to seek that which we can improve upon and not wait for it to come to us. For many of us there is room for improvement.



9. Have a strong pride in our profession -

Ok, I believe that we can get top marks for this one. While we may not be the best in showing our pride, it is still there. Nothing makes me cringe more than an AME/AMT when being introduced as being in aviation says: "I'm only an AME/AMT." Why not say: "I work at keeping aircraft Safe to fly" because that is what you do. Enough of that, as Giselle Richardson put it, "humble shit."



10. Reflect this pride in all that we do -

Again, I believe that the majority of us do this. We set a high standard for ourselves and are proud when we see the results of our work take to the skies. Now the "ALL that we do" may not always apply as I've seen some very dilapidated vehicles driven by our professionals. The excuse I've heard is they know just how far it will go before failing. I believe that most of us deserve a pass in this category as well.



11. Are willing to share our specialized knowledge with our fellow man -

I would like to think that we would all be willing to assist a fellow professional but I have seen instances where the request for help was met with: "it's in the manual or go and find it yourself". Perhaps the person didn't know the answer either and this was his way to cover up that he didn't know. It could also come from our tendency to be a loner. In any case, some of us could do better.



12. Will mentor and assist those among us who are just beginning. -

We were all beginners at one time and I can recall the great feeling at being able to ask a question without being ridiculed with, "didn't they

teach you anything in prep school"? To me a mentor is a true professional in every way.

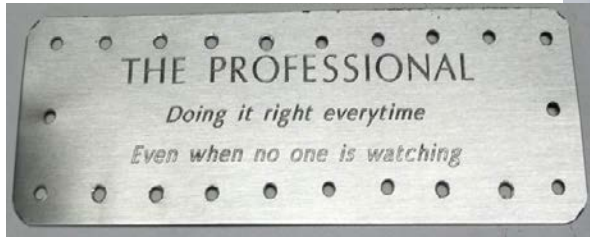
Appearance is a final one that is not included on the list however; it is also expected of the professional. Appearing neat and tidy is a mark of a professional but I don't see it. I believe the title has way deeper meaning than how you look. Our work certainly does not always lend itself to a clean and polished appearance but we should try.

Attached is a painting that I had commissioned many years ago to be a prize at a Symposium that did not happen because it seems that after 25 years no one was interested in learning more about their profession. Unfortunately, it was cancelled and at a very big loss. I wanted a painting that represented us and thus had it called it "The Professional."

Riveted to the wing shaped frame



*The Professional
Painting 16" X 24" plus frame*



complete with real rivets is the plaque that I felt represented us doing it right no matter what the task or where we were. We are professionals in every sense and should be very proud of it. **I am.**