

# Professionalism

Skills for Workplace Success

4e



Lydia E. Anderson  
Sandra B. Bolt

# Professionalism

## Skills for Workplace Success

Fourth Edition

Lydia E. Anderson

Sandra B. Bolt

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## Author Profiles

**Lydia E. Anderson** has a master's degree in business administration with an emphasis in marketing. In addition to years of corporate marketing and strategic planning experience, she has been teaching for over eighteen years in both community college and university settings. She is currently a tenured faculty member and former chair of the Business Administration and Marketing Department at Fresno City College in Fresno, California. She also serves as an adjunct professor at California State University, Fresno. Her teaching areas of expertise include human relations in business, management, supervision, human resource management, and marketing. Ms. Anderson is also active in (California) statewide business curriculum development, student success and enrollment management initiatives, and in Academic Senate. She regularly consults with corporations on business topics relating to management and marketing to ensure currency in instruction.

**Sandra B. Bolt** has a master's degree in business administration with an emphasis in human resource management. She has been teaching in the college setting for over twenty-four years. She is currently a tenured faculty member and past chair of the Business and Technology Department at Fresno City College in Fresno, California. Her teaching areas of expertise include workplace relationships, office occupations, office technology, résumé/interview, business communication, document formatting, and computer applications. She currently serves as the Secretary-Treasurer of the State Center Federation of Teachers. She has extensive secretarial, treasurer, and leadership experience and has served as a computer applications trainer. She has led personal financial management sessions for community groups. She has been a volunteer guest speaker at professional conferences and high school career fairs, in addition to her involvement with committees and student functions at Fresno City College.

Both authors have used their professional, educational, and personal experiences to provide readers with realistic stories and challenges experienced in a typical workplace.

## Dedication

To all those looking for the job of your dreams—may God richly bless you as you reach your professional and personal goals and ultimately discover that success starts from within.

—Lydia E. Anderson

I dedicate this fourth edition to everyone who has used this text for improving professionalism in the workplace. I thank my husband, Bret, for being supportive, loving, and my best friend; and to my son, Brandon, who has made me proud by growing into such a wonderful young man. In addition, I dedicate this text to the memory of my parents and to God, for giving me the blessings and strength I have in my life.

—Sandra B. Bolt

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# Acknowledgments

The success of our first three editions exceeded our wildest dreams, and we are tremendously thankful to those who have included our materials in their educational toolboxes. This fourth edition continues to integrate feedback from business leaders and educators who openly share their expertise, ideas, and concerns regarding necessary workplace skills and expected behaviors specific to today's tumultuous economic environment. This fourth edition continues to prepare students for real-world success and contributes to employer and economic success as well. We remain committed to providing readers a competitive advantage in successfully realizing and achieving their career goals and believe this updated edition does just that.

Our continued thanks to Pearson Education for providing us this opportunity. We are specifically grateful to Claire Hunter for her consistency and support.

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# Preface

*Professionalism Skills for Workplace Success*, fourth edition, continues to remain committed to its original purpose of addressing employer concerns by providing those new to the workplace with basic skills for success on the job and providing job seekers the tools they need to secure the job of their dreams. This unique text prepares students for their first professional workplace experience by linking an individual's life plan to behavior necessary for workplace success. The text content is applicable to any individual who will be transitioning from the classroom to the work environment. The book is designed not just as a textbook, but as a workbook to be kept and referred to throughout one's career.

While economics and technology continued to be the primary influence for revisions in this fourth edition, the authors also strived for a broader reach by addressing contemporary workplace issues and providing examples for careers that occur inside and outside a traditional office setting. Our world continues to struggle with challenging economics and historic unemployment rates. Therefore, it is imperative that job seekers and those new to the workplace not only demonstrate, but exceed expectations regarding business etiquette, appropriate technology use, and proper workplace attire. Students also need to understand how these expectations differ from personal social situations. In today's increasingly competitive work environment, it is essential that students communicate in a professional manner, maturely deal with conflict, and be accountable team members, consistently behaving in a fair and ethical manner. This fourth-edition text continues to address these issues by providing readers with realistic, current, and practical skills necessary to maintain success on the job.

## Unique Approach

*Professionalism Skills for Workplace Success*, fourth edition, extends beyond a typical student success or résumé/job search text. The foundation of this text assists students in creating a life plan that addresses short- and long-term personal, professional/career, and financial goals. The text then provides students practical skills and challenges to immediately begin implementing behaviors that support their life plan, with a primary emphasis on professional/career behaviors. The end of each chapter provides activities that promote student success and relates chapter content back to a student's life plan. Text content seamlessly emphasizes the relationship between job search/résumé development and human relations in the workplace. This fourth edition continues to integrate input from industry leaders, and addresses timely and critical topics students need to know when transitioning from campus to career. Presented in a simple, highly interactive format, this fourth-edition text assists individuals in understanding the foundation of effective workplace relationships and how to appropriately manage these relationships toward career success. Beginning with the basic management principle that individual workplace performance affects organizational success and profitability readers are able to integrate soft skills within the framework of a formal business structure. The topics and principles presented benefit individuals in any industry and career. Utilizing Topic Situations embedded in each chapter, students gain valuable insights from real workplace dilemmas presented as mini-case studies. Each Topic Situation is followed by a Topic Response that poses questions on how best to handle these

challenging dilemmas. Back by popular demand are introductory assessments, in-chapter exercises, talk it outs (student discussion topics), and valuable end-of-chapter activities designed to improve the reader's understanding and application of the material through written and oral communication skill building assignments.

This book is written for individuals wanting to excel in their career. Attitude, communication, and human relations are the keys to surviving in today's challenging, competitive, and uncertain workplace. The text teaches realistic career building skills and motivates individuals toward improving both personal and professional performance.

## Organization

When used in its entirety, the text is divided into four modules and sixteen chapters that are arranged to accommodate quarter-, half-, or full-semester courses taught in a traditional face-to-face classroom, online, or in a hybrid structure. Modules include:

- Module 1: Self-Management
- Module 2: Workplace Basics
- Module 3: Relationships
- Module 4: Career Planning Tools

When using selected chapters, it is strongly recommended that complimentary chapters accompany each other to provide complete content coverage. Complimentary chapters include:

- “Communication” (chapter 9) and “Electronic Communications” (chapter 10)
- “Motivation, Leadership, and Teams” (chapter 11) and “Conflict and Negotiation” (chapter 12)
- “Job Search Skills” (chapter 13), “Résumé Package” (chapter 14), and “Interview Techniques” (chapter 15)

## New to This Edition

**The text blends career goals and workplace relations throughout, emphasizing three pillars of teaching and learning: life planning, workplace skills, and career planning.**

**Life Planning** offers enhanced learning outcomes, in-chapter exercises, and end-of-chapter activities to support Bloom's Taxonomy and help students think critically about their life and career goals.

- **Summary words and revised learning outcomes** provide introduction to topic and content focus.
- **In-chapter exercises have been updated throughout including changing Cory stories to Topic Situation and Topic Response case studies, Web Searches, “Think About It” and “Talk About It” discussion and**

**reflection questions** promote discussion, provide a means for topic clarification, and immediate application of content.

- **Enhanced end-of-chapter *Concept Review and Application* section** reinforces student learning by providing hands-on application of topic content. These include *Workplace Do's and Don'ts*, *Summary of Key Concepts, Key Terms* (set up as a Self-Quiz to be matched with definitions), *Think Like a Boss*, and new/revised *End of Chapter Activities*
- **How-Do-You-Rate?** Assessments provide students an introduction to the chapter topic through brief, fun, and realistic applications.

**Workplace Skills** provide new and enhanced content to address employer concerns related to millennial and reentry students.

- **Personal branding content and increased focus on quality and accountability** help students recognize the importance of immediately identifying a personal brand and integrating professional behaviors that represent that brand.
- **Discussion on student loans, cash management, and online protection on identity theft** addresses personal finance issues today's students face
- **Increased discussion, examples, and case studies on communication/technology use etiquette** addresses employer concern that today's students lack basic communication, spelling, and grammatical skills and are too reliant on communication devices.

**Career Planning** features revised career planning to address current market conditions.

- **Key topics have been reordered, including completion of accomplishments worksheet, writing of career objective/personal profile, and personal commercial** streamlines the process and better identifies key skill sets.
- **New and enhanced checklists for job search tools and processes** ensure students include/address key elements necessary for the job search portfolio, interview portfolio, interview preparation, and post-interview activities.
- **Advanced Skill Set Résumé Format** provides a résumé format for those with extensive career experience. This format highlights, communicates, and sells specific job skills and work accomplishments, and replaces the chronological format.

## Also Available with MyStudentSuccessLab™

This title is also available with MyStudentSuccessLab—an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program designed to work with this text to engage students and improve results. Within its structured environment, students practice what they learn, test their understanding, and pursue a plan that helps them better absorb course material and understand difficult concepts.



## Personalize Learning with MyStudentSuccessLab

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- **Full Course Pre- and Post-Diagnostic** test based on Bloom’s Taxonomy linked to key learning objectives in each topic.
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- **Student Resources** include Finish Strong 247 YouTube videos, Calculators, and Professionalism/Research & Writing/Student Success tools.
- **Student Inventories** increase self-awareness, and include *Golden Personality* (similar to Meyers Briggs, gives insights on personal style), *Conley Readiness Index (CRI)* (measures readiness and likelihood for success, gives insight into student aspirations).
- **Title-specific version available** as an option for those who teach closely to their text. This course would include the national eText, Chapter specific quizzing, and Learning Path modules that align with the chapter naming conventions of the book.

## Instructor Resources

### Online Instructor’s Manual

([www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc))

This manual provides a framework of ideas and suggestions for activities, journal writing, thought-provoking situations, and online implementation including MyStudentSuccessLab recommendations.

### Online PowerPoint Presentation

([www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc))

A comprehensive set of PowerPoint slides that can be used by instructors for class presentations and also by students for lecture preview or review. The PowerPoint presentation includes summary slides with overview information for each chapter to help students understand and review concepts within each chapter.

### MyStudentSuccessLab

([www.mystudentsuccesslab.com](http://www.mystudentsuccesslab.com))

This title is also available with MyStudentSuccessLab—an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program designed to work with this text to engage students and improve results. Within its structured environment, students practice what they learn, test their understanding, and pursue a plan that helps them better absorb course material and understand difficult concepts. Beyond the Full Course Pre- and Post-Diagnostic assessments, and Pre- and Post-tests within each module, additional learning outcomes-based tests can be created/selected using a secure testing engine, and may be printed or delivered online.

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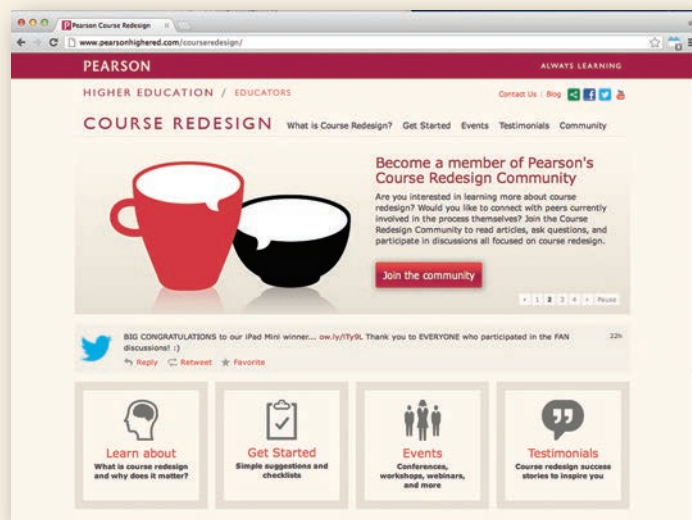
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## MyStudentSuccessLab™

MyLab from Pearson has been designed and refined with a single purpose in mind—to help educators break through to improving results for their students.

**MyStudentSuccessLab™ (MSSL)** is a learning outcomes-based technology that advances students' knowledge and builds critical skills, offering ongoing personal and professional development through peer-led video interviews, interactive practice exercises, and activities that focus on academic, life, and professional preparation.

The **Conley Readiness Index (CRI)**, developed by **Dr. David Conley**, is now embedded in **MyStudentSuccessLab**. This research-based, self-diagnostic online tool measures college and career readiness; it is personalized, research-based, and provides actionable data. Dr. David Conley is a nationally recognized leader in research, policy, and solution development with a sincere passion for improving college and career readiness.

Developed exclusively for Pearson by Dr. Conley, the Conley Readiness Index assesses mastery in each of the “Four Keys” that are critical to college and career readiness:

KEY COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	KEY CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	KEY LEARNING SKILLS & TECHNIQUES	KEY TRANSITION KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS
<b>Think</b>	<b>Know</b>	<b>Act</b>	<b>Go</b>
<b>Problem Formulation</b> Hypothesize Strategize	<b>Structure of Knowledge</b> Key Terms and Terminology Factual Information Linking Ideas Organizing Concepts	<b>Ownership of Learning</b> Goal Setting Persistence Self-awareness Motivation Help-seeking Progress Monitoring Self-efficacy	<b>Contextual</b> Aspirations Norms/Culture
<b>Research</b> Identify Collect	<b>Attitudes Toward Learning Content</b> Challenge Level Value Attribution Effort	<b>Learning Techniques</b> Time Management Test Taking Skills Note Taking Skills Memorization/recall Strategic Reading Collaborative Learning Technology	<b>Procedural</b> Institution Choice Admission Process
<b>Interpretation</b> Analyze Evaluate	<b>Technical Knowledge &amp; Skills</b> Specific College and Career Readiness Standards		<b>Financial</b> Tuition Financial Aid
<b>Communication</b> Organize Construct			<b>Cultural</b> Postsecondary Norms
<b>Precision &amp; Accuracy</b> Monitor Confirm			<b>Personal</b> Self-advocacy and Institutional Context

Topics include:

Student Success Learning Path

- Conley Readiness Index
- College Transition
- Communication
- Creating an Academic Plan
- Critical Thinking
- Financial Literacy
- Goal Setting
- Information Literacy
- Learning Preferences
- Listening and Note Taking
- Majors and Careers Exploration
- Memory and Studying
- Online Learning
- Problem Solving
- Reading and Annotating
- Stress Management
- Test Taking
- Time Management

Career Success Learning Path

- Career Portfolio
- Interviewing
- Job Search
- Self-Management Skills at Work
- Teamwork
- Workplace Communication
- Workplace Etiquette

## Assessment

Beyond the Pre- and Post-Full Course Diagnostic Assessments and Pre- and Post-Tests within each module, additional learning-outcome-based tests can be created using a secure testing engine, and may be printed or delivered online. These tests can be customized by editing individual questions or entire tests.

## Reporting

Measurement matters—and is ongoing in nature. MyStudentSuccessLab lets you determine what data you need, set up your course accordingly, and collect data via reports. The high quality and volume of test questions allows for data comparison and measurement.

## Content and Functionality Training

The Instructor Implementation Guide provides grading rubrics, suggestions for video use, and more to save time on course prep. Our Best Practices Guide and “How do I...” YouTube videos indicate how to use MyStudentSuccessLab, from getting started to utilizing the Gradebook.

## Peer Support

The Student Success Community site is a place for you to connect with other educators to exchange ideas and advice on courses, content, and MyStudentSuccessLab. The site is filled with timely articles, discussions, video posts, and more. Join, share, and be inspired!  
[www.mystudentsuccesscommunity.com](http://www.mystudentsuccesscommunity.com)

The Faculty Advisor Network is Pearson’s peer-to-peer mentoring program in which experienced MyStudentSuccessLab users share best practices and expertise. Our Faculty Advisors are experienced in one-on-one phone and email coaching, presentations, and live training sessions.

## Integration and Compliance

You can integrate our digital solutions with your learning management system in a variety of ways. For more information, or if documentation is needed for ADA compliance, contact your local Pearson representative.

### **MyStudentSuccessLab users have access to:**

- Full course Pre- and Post-Diagnostic Assessments linked to learning outcomes
- Pre- and Post-tests dedicated to individual topics
- Overviews that summarize objectives and skills
- Videos on key issues “by students, for students”
- Practice exercises that instill student confidence
- Graded activities to build critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
- Journal writing assignments with online rubrics for consistent, simpler grading
- Resources like Finish Strong 24/7 YouTube videos, calculators, professionalism/research & writing/ student success tools
- Student inventories including **Conley Readiness Index** and **Golden Personality**

Students utilizing MyStudentSuccessLab may purchase Pearson texts in a number of cost-saving formats—including eTexts, loose-leaf Books à la Carte editions, and more.

# CourseConnect™

Trust that your online course is the best in its class.

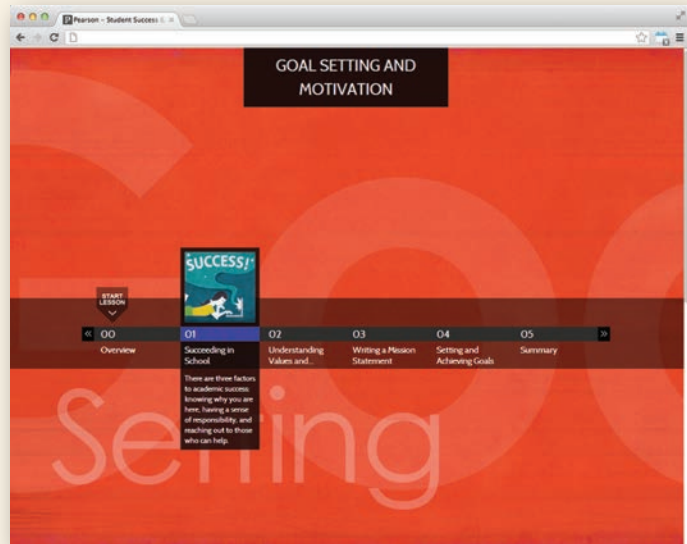
Designed by subject matter experts and credentialed instructional designers, CourseConnect offers award-winning customizable online courses that help students build skills for ongoing personal and professional development.

CourseConnect uses topic-based, interactive modules that follow a consistent learning path—from introduction, to presentation, to activity, to review. Its built-in tools—including user-specific pacing charts, personalized study guides, and interactive exercises—provide a student-centric learning experience that minimizes distractions and helps students stay on track and complete the course successfully.

Features such as relevant video, audio, and activities, personalized (or editable) syllabi, discussion forum topics and questions, assignments, and quizzes are all easily accessible. CourseConnect is available in a

variety of learning management systems and accommodates various term lengths as well as self-paced study.

And, our compact textbook editions align to CourseConnect course outcomes.



## Choose from the following three course outlines (“Lesson Plans”)

### Student Success

- Goal Setting, Values, and Motivation
- Time Management
- Financial Literacy
- Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving
- Learning Preferences
- Listening and Note-Taking in Class
- Reading and Annotating
- Studying, Memory, and Test-Taking
- Communicating and Teamwork
- Information Literacy
- Staying Balanced: Stress Management
- Career Exploration

### Career Success

- Planning Your Career Search
- Knowing Yourself: Explore the Right Career Path
- Knowing the Market: Find Your Career Match
- Preparing Yourself: Gain Skills and Experience Now
- Networking
- Targeting Your Search: Locate Positions, Ready Yourself
- Building a Portfolio: Your Resume and Beyond
- Preparing for Your Interview
- Giving a Great Interview
- Negotiating Job Offers, Ensuring Future Success

### Professional Success

- Introducing Professionalism
- Workplace Goal Setting
- Workplace Ethics and Your Career
- Workplace Time Management
- Interpersonal Skills at Work
- Workplace Conflict Management
- Workplace Communications: Email and Presentations
- Effective Workplace Meetings
- Workplace Teams
- Customer Focus and You
- Understanding Human Resources
- Managing Career Growth and Change

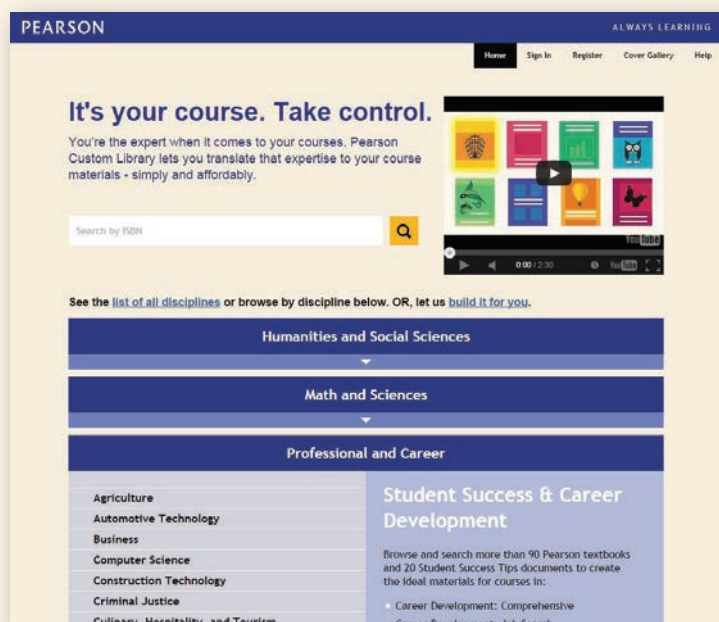
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# 1

## Attitude, Goal Setting, and Life Management

future • dreams • happiness



After studying these topics, you will benefit by:

- Discovering the influence professionalism and positive human relations have on personal, academic, and career success
- Knowing how individual personality, attitude, and values affect the workplace
- Recognizing how self-efficacy and personal branding affect your confidence
- Developing a strategy to deal with past negative experiences and other barriers to success
- Examining the impact goal setting has on creating a life plan in today's economy
- Choosing priorities to support your goals

### HOW DO YOU RATE?

Are you self-centered?	Yes	No
1. Do you rarely use the word I in conversations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. When in line with coworkers, do you let coworkers go ahead of you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you keep personal work accomplishments private?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you rarely interrupt conversations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you celebrate special events (e.g., birthdays, holidays) with your coworkers by sending them a card, a note, or small gift?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “yes” to two or more of these questions, well done. Your actions are more focused on the needs of others and you are most likely not self-centered.



## All About You

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a self-discovery to identify how to become and remain productive and successful in the workplace. The first step in this self-discovery is to perform a simple exercise. Look in a mirror and identify the first three words that immediately come to mind.

These three words are your mirror words. **Mirror words** describe how you view yourself and how you believe others view you. Your perception of yourself influences your relationship with coworkers and your workplace performance.

This text is all about professionalism in the workplace. The goal of both your instructor and the authors is to not only assist you in securing the job of your dreams, but to keep that great job and advance your career based on healthy, quality, and productive work habits that benefit you, your coworkers, and your organization. **Professionalism** is defined as workplace behaviors that result in positive business relationships. This text provides you tools to help you experience a more fulfilling and productive career. The secret to healthy relationships at work is to first understand yourself. Once you understand your personal needs, motivators, and irritants, it becomes easier to understand and successfully work with others. This is why the first part of this chapter focuses on your personality, your values, and your self-concept.

An individual's personality and attitude dictate how he or she responds to conflict, crisis, and other typical workplace situations. Each of these typical workplace situations involves working with and through people. Understanding your own personality and attitude makes it much easier to understand your reaction to others' personalities and attitudes.

**Human relations** are the interactions that occur with and through people. These interactions create relationships. Therefore, you theoretically have relationships with everyone you come into contact with at work. For an organization to be profitable, its employees must be productive. It is difficult to be productive if you cannot work with your colleagues, bosses, vendors, and/or customers. Workplace productivity is a result of positive workplace interactions and relationships.

Personality is a result of influences, and there are many outside influences that affect workplace relationships. These influences may include immediate family, friends, extended family, religious affiliation, and even society as a whole. Conversely, experiences and influences at work affect your personal life. Therefore, to understand workplace relationships, you must first understand yourself.

## Personality and Values

Behavior is a reflection of personality. **Personality** is a stable set of traits that assist in explaining and predicting an individual's behavior. Personality traits can be positive, such as being caring, considerate, organized, enthusiastic, or reliable. However, personality traits can also be negative, such as being rude, unfocused, lazy, or immature. For example, if you are typically organized at work and suddenly you become disorganized, others may believe something is wrong because your disorganized behavior is not in sync with your stable set of organized traits. An individual's personality is shaped by many variables, including past experience, family, friends, religion, and societal influences. Perhaps a family member

was incredibly organized and passed this trait on to you. Maybe someone in your sphere of influence was incredibly disorganized, which influenced you to be very organized. These experiences (positive or not) shape your values. **Values** are things that are important to you as an individual based on your personal experiences and influences. These influences include religion, family, and societal issues such as sexual preference, political affiliation, and materialism. Note that you may have good or bad values. You may value achievement, family, money, security, or freedom. For example, one individual may not value money because he or she has been told that “money is the root of all evil.” Contrast this with an individual who values money because he or she has been taught that money is a valuable resource used to ensure a safe, secure future. Because values are things that are important to you, they will directly affect your personality. If you have been taught that money is a valuable resource, you may be very careful in your spending. Your personality trait will be that of a diligent, hardworking person who spends cautiously. A more in-depth discussion of values and how they relate to business ethics is presented in Chapter 5.

### Topic Situation

While in school, Charley worked hard to secure a new job as an assistant at his college bookstore. Charley’s parents are both college graduates with successful careers, which influences Charley’s values and beliefs in the ability to perform successfully at school and work. However, many of Charley’s friends are not attending college, and have a hard time securing and/or maintaining employment. For this reason, Charley gets no support from these friends regarding earning a degree and holding a job.

### TOPIC RESPONSE

If Charley continues to associate with his non-supportive friends, how could these friendships influence Charley’s performance at school and work?

## Attitude

An **attitude** is a strong belief about people, things, and situations. For example, you either care or do not care how your classmates feel about you. Your attitude is related to your values and personality and affected by past success and failures. Using the previous example, if you value money, your attitude will be positive toward work because you value what you get in return for your work effort—a paycheck. Attitude affects performance: An individual’s performance significantly influences a group’s performance, and a group’s performance, in turn, affects an organization’s performance. Think about a barrel of juicy red apples. Place one bad apple in the barrel of good apples, and, over time, the entire barrel will be spoiled. That is why it is so important to evaluate personal influences. The barrel reflects your personal goals and your workplace behavior. Your attitude affects not only your performance, but also the performance of those with whom you come in contact.

Does this mean you avoid anyone you believe is a bad influence? Not necessarily. You cannot avoid certain individuals, such as relatives and coworkers. However, you should be aware of the impact individuals have on your life. If certain individuals have a negative influence, avoid or limit your exposure to them (bad apple). If you continue to expose yourself to negative influences, you can lose sight of your goals, which may result in a poor attitude and poor performance. Choose your friendships wisely and surround yourself with positive people. Positive people are truthful, faithful, loving, and supportive. Negative people interfere with you reaching your goals by making you uncomfortable or by distracting you.

### Think About It

Identify one friend that you believe is a positive influence on you and a friend that is a negative influence. How should you handle these relationships?

## Talk It Out

What cartoon character best reflects your personality and why?

## Self-Efficacy and Its Influences

Review your “mirror words” from the beginning of this chapter. Were your words positive or negative? Whatever you are feeling is a result of your **self-concept**. Self-concept is how you view yourself. Thinking you are intelligent or believing you are attractive are examples of self-concept. **Self-image** is your belief of how others view you. If your self-concept is positive and strong, you will display confidence and not worry about how others view you and your actions. If you are insecure, you will rely heavily on what others think of you. Although it is important to show concern for what others think of you, it is more important to have a positive self-concept. Note that there is a difference between being conceited and self-confident. Those who behave in a conceited manner have too high an opinion of themselves as compared to others. People are drawn to individuals who are humble, display a good attitude, are confident, and are consistently positive. It is easy to see the tremendous impact both personality and attitude have in the development of your self-esteem and self-concept. One final factor that influences self-concept and performance is that of self-efficacy. **Self-efficacy** is your belief in your ability to perform a task. For example, if you are confident in your math abilities, you will most likely score high on a math exam because you believe you are strong in that subject. However, if you are required to take a math placement exam for a job and are not confident in your math abilities, you will most likely not perform well. The way you feel about yourself and your environment is reflected in how you treat others. This is called **projection**. A positive self-concept will be projected toward others.

Envision a hand mirror. The handle of the mirror (the foundation) is your personality. The frame of the mirror represents your personal values. The mirror itself is your attitude, which is reflected for you and the world to see. The way you view yourself is your self-concept; the way you believe others see you is your self-image. As you begin networking with others, interviewing for a new job, or embarking on a new career, create a **personal brand**. A personal brand reflects traits you want others to think of when they think of you. These personal traits may include your appearance, your values, or specific knowledge or skills that make you unique, interesting, and of value to others. Throughout this text, you will be gaining additional tools designed to improve your professionalism. Use these tools to refine your personal brand and make a commitment to continue enhancing your brand. Doing so will contribute to a positive self-concept and increase your odds for both personal and professional success.

### Exercise 1.1

Define your personal brand. Identify desired appearance, personality, knowledge and skills, personal values, and attitude.

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## Dealing with Negative Baggage

Many of us have experienced people who appear to have a chip on their shoulder that negatively influences their behavior. The negativity is reflected in an individual's personality. More often than not, the "chip" is a reflection of a painful past experience. What many do not realize is that negative past experiences sometimes turn into personal baggage that creates barriers to career success. Examples of negative past experiences may include traumatic issues such as an unplanned pregnancy or a criminal offense. Other times, the negative experience involved a poor choice or a failure at something that had great meaning. These experiences are the ones that most heavily influence one's personality, values, and self-concept, and in turn, may affect workplace attitude and performance.

### Topic Situation

When starting high school, Keira made a poor choice and got in minor trouble with the law. Keira paid her dues, yet is still embarrassed and sometimes feels unworthy of a successful future. Keira is trying to climb the mountain of success carrying a hundred-pound suitcase. The suitcase is filled with the thoughts of a previous poor choice and embarrassment. Because of Keira's motivation to complete college, most friends and acquaintances are unaware of her past mistake. However, if Keira continues to carry this negative baggage, she may lose sight of her goals.

### TOPIC RESPONSE

What steps should Keira take to help her achieve her goals?

If you have had a negative experience that is hindering your ability to succeed, recognize the impact your past has on your future. Although you cannot change yesterday, you can most certainly improve your today and your future. Take these steps toward a more productive future:

1. *Confront your past.* Whatever skeleton is in your past, admit that the negative event occurred. Do not try to hide or deny that it happened. There is no need to share the episode with everyone, but it may help to confidentially share the experience with someone you trust (friend or trained professional) who had no involvement with the negative experience. Acknowledgement of the negative event is the first step toward healing.
2. *Practice forgiveness.* Past negative experiences hurt. A process in healing is to forgive whoever hurt you. Forgiveness does not justify that what occurred was acceptable, but reconciles in your heart that you are dealing with the experience and are beginning to heal. Identify who needs forgiveness. The act of forgiveness may involve a conversation with someone, or it may just involve you deciding to no longer carry this burden.
3. *Move forward.* Let go of hurt, guilt, and/or embarrassment. Do not keep dwelling on the past and using it as an excuse or barrier toward achieving your goals. If you are caught in this step, physically write the experience down on a piece of paper and the words "I forgive Joe" (replace the name with the individual who harmed you). Then take the paper and destroy it. This physical act puts you in control and allows you to visualize the negative experience being diminished. As you become more confident in yourself, your negative experience becomes enveloped with the rest of your past and frees you to create a positive future.

This sometimes painful process is necessary if your goal is to become the best individual you can be. Dealing with negative baggage is not something that happens overnight. As mentioned previously, some individuals may need professional assistance to help them through the process. There is no shame in seeking help. In fact, there is great freedom when you have finally let go of the baggage and are able to climb to the top of the mountain unencumbered.

## Locus of Control

The reality is that you will not always be surrounded by positive influences and you cannot control everything that happens in your life. Your attitude is affected by who you believe has control over situations that occur in your life, both personally and professionally. The **locus of control** identifies who you believe controls your future. An individual with an *internal* locus of control believes that he or she controls his or her own future. An individual with an *external* locus of control believes that others control his or her future.

Extremes on either end of the locus of control are not healthy. Realize that individual effort and a belief in the ability to perform well translate to individual success. External factors also influence your ability to achieve personal goals. You cannot totally control the environment and future. Power, politics, and other factors discussed later in the text play an important part in the attainment of goals. Successful individuals take personal responsibility and avoid blaming others.

## Learning Styles

Another element of personality is one's **learning style**. Learning styles define the method of how you best take in information and/or learn new ideas. There are three primary learning styles: visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic.

To determine what your dominant learning style is, perform this simple exercise. Imagine you are lost and need directions. Do you:

- a. Want to see a map
- b. Want someone to tell you the directions
- c. Want to draw or write down the directions yourself

If you prefer answer *a*, you are a visual learner. You prefer learning by seeing. If you selected *b*, you are an auditory learner. You learn best by hearing. If you selected *c*, you are a tactile/kinesthetic learner, which means you learn best by feeling, touching, or holding. No one learning style is better than the other. However, it is important to recognize your primary and secondary learning styles so that you can get the most out of your world (in and out of the classroom or on the job). As a visual learner, you may digest material best by reading and researching. Auditory learners pay close attention to course lectures and class discussions. Tactile/kinesthetic learners will learn best by performing application exercises and physically writing course notes. Recognize what works best for you and implement that method to maximize your learning experience. Also recognize that not everyone learns the same way you do and not all information is presented in your preferred method. With that recognition, you can become a better classmate, team member, coworker, and boss.

## Exercise 1.2

Apply the learning styles discussed and complete the following statements.

In the classroom, I learn best by \_\_\_\_\_

In the classroom, I have difficulty learning when \_\_\_\_\_

How will I use this information to perform better? \_\_\_\_\_

## Importance and Influences of Personal Goal Setting

Everyone has dreams. These dreams may be for a college degree, a better life for loved ones, financial security, or the acquisition of material items such as a new car or home. Goal setting is the first step toward turning a dream into a reality. This important process provides focus and identifies specific steps that need to be accomplished. It is also a common practice used by successful individuals and organizations. A **goal** is a target. Think of a goal as a reward at the top of a ladder. To reach a goal, you need to progress up each step of the ladder. Each step contributes to the achievement of a goal and supports your personal values. Goals help you decide what you want in your future, increase self-concept, and help overcome procrastination, fear, and failure.

When you set goals, career plans become more clear and meaningful. They motivate you to continue working to improve yourself and help you achieve—not just hope for—what you want in life.

### Topic Situation

At 22 years of age, Austin had only a high-school education. After working odd jobs at minimum wage since graduating from high school, Austin decided to attend college to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Austin set a long-term goal to finish college in five years. Self-supporting and having to work, he set a realistic goal to obtain an associate degree in accounting within three years. After achieving that goal, Austin plans to find a job as an account clerk while finishing school. This goal will increase his income and self-confidence. Still committed to becoming a CPA, he plans to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting within two years after receiving the associate degree.

Goals can and should be set in all major areas of your life, including personal, career, financial, educational, and physical. Goals help maintain a positive outlook. They also contribute to creating a more positive perception of yourself and result in improved human relations with others.

Example of Austin's goals:

Five-year long-term goal	Obtain a bachelor's degree in accounting
Three-year long-term goal	Obtain an associate degree in accounting and secure a job as an account clerk
One-year short-term goal	Successfully pass the appropriate courses toward the associate degree and identify an internship
Now	Apply for school and find a part-time job to obtain work experience

### TOPIC RESPONSE

What are specific steps Austin can take to ensure he reaches his goal of becoming a CPA?

### Talk It Out

Share one goal you have set for this class.

## How to Set Goals

As explained earlier, achieving goals is like climbing a ladder. Imagine that there is a major prize (what you value most) at the top of the ladder. The prize can be considered your long-term goal, and each step on the ladder is a progressive short-term goal that helps you reach the major prize.

Set short-term and long-term goals and put them in writing. **Long-term goals** are goals that take longer than a year to accomplish, with a realistic window of up to 10 years.

To set a goal, first identify what you want to accomplish in life. Write down everything you can think of, including personal, career, and educational dreams. Next, review the list and choose which items you most value. In reviewing your list, ask yourself where you want to be in one year, five years, and 10 years. The items you identified are your long-term goals. Keep each goal realistic and something you truly want. Each goal should be attainable, yet challenging enough to work toward. Identify why each goal is important to you. This is a key step toward setting yourself up for success. Next, identify opportunities and potential barriers toward reaching these goals. Remember Austin's goal to be a CPA? Austin believes becoming a CPA represents success. It is important to him, and it is a realistic goal that can be reached.

### Exercise 1.3

Identify educational, personal, and professional accomplishments you would like to achieve in 5–10 years.

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**Short-term goals** are goals that can be reached within a year's time. They are commonly set to help reach long-term goals. Businesses often refer to short-term goals as objectives because they are measurable and have a one year or less time line. Short-term goals can be achieved in one day, a week, a month, or even several months. As short-term goals are met, long-term goals should be updated. Just like long-term goals, short-term goals (objectives) must be realistic, achievable, and important to you. They need to be measurable so you know when you have actually reached them.

An additional long-term goal for Austin is to buy a car one year after graduation. Austin has set several short-term goals, one being to save a specific amount of money each month. To do this, he needs to work a certain number of hours each week. He also needs to be specific about the type of car, whether to buy used or new, and whether he needs to take out a loan. The answers to these questions will determine how much money Austin will need to save each month and if the one-year time frame is realistic.

## Exercise 1-4

Using the goals you identified in Exercise 1.3, identify how you can turn each dream into a reality.

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A popular and easy goal-setting tool is the SMART method. **SMART** is an acronym for writing goals to ensure they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time based.

			Example
S	Specific	Clearly identify what exactly you want to accomplish and, if possible, make your goal quantifiable. This makes your goal specific.	Become a manager for a top accounting firm
M	Measurable	Make your goal measurable. Identify how you will know when you have achieved your goal.	Having the job as a manager
A	Achievable	Keep your goal achievable but not too easily attainable or too far out of reach. A good achievable goal is challenging, yet attainable and realistic.	Getting good grades in college and gaining work experience along the way
R	Relevant	Relevant personal goals have meaning to its owner. The goal should belong to you, and you should have (or have access to) the appropriate resources to accomplish the goal.	I want to do this
T	Time Based	Attach a specific date or time period to provide a time frame for achieving the goal.	By 2021

For example, instead of writing, “I will become a manager in the future,” write, “After attending college and getting work experience, I will become a manager with a top accounting firm by the beginning of the year 2021.” After you have written a goal, give it the SMART test to increase its probability for success.

After you have written positive and detailed goals, there are a few additional aspects of goal setting to consider. These include owning and taking control of your goals.

Owning the goal ensures that the goal belongs to you. You are the one who should decide your goals, not your parents, spouse, significant other, friends, relatives, or anyone else. For example, if Austin goes to college because it is his personal dream to be a CPA, that goal will be accomplished. However, if Austin becomes a CPA because his parents want him to be a CPA, this will not be Austin’s goal and it will be harder to accomplish.