

## Challenging Professional



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Dear Readers

The general understanding is, professionals are those who have good and secured jobs as compared to business people or those in public services. In those days, being a professional was probably the ultimate career goal. Professional courses such as architecture, engineering, law, accountancy and medicine were the most sought after places. Does this still hold true now?

A professional is defined in many ways. One of it is 'a person engaging in an activity for gain or as a means of livelihood'. Another one is 'an activity undertaken or performed for gain by people who are paid'. A person who engages in an activity with great competence is also known as a professional. Most people like to work with professionals because of the impression that they know a job will be done well, on time and at a reasonable price. In short, being a professional signifies a positive and healthy attitude towards work.

Indeed, the perception of professionals or professionalism has changed over the years. We even have professional players in football, golf, basketball and cricket to name a few. So what is the difference between a professional engineer and a professional golfer, for instance? Both are engaged in an activity as a means of livelihood. However, do we like to be compared in this way? Surely, most of us would prefer not, at least in terms of competency. While engineers or even other professionals struggle through a number of years of tertiary

education, I have not come across a professional sport player holding a formal degree acknowledging their 'classroom' achievement. Nevertheless, most of them earn more money than us engineers!

The point here is, being professional has less to do with how much one gets paid for the job than how competent one discharges his or her responsibility. A professional mistake by an engineer could have far worst implications than a professional foul conceded by a professional footballer. The trend in professional practices therefore demands for better knowledge, better application of theoretical knowhow, better hunger for innovation, better integrity, better transparency, better attitude towards work, better manager, better leadership, better ethical practices, better governance and above all better professionalism than what we are seeing now. We need to raise the bar or benchmark for quality so that 'par excellence' is the daily motto of our professional practices rather than an exception. Are we ready to be real professionals?

Please share your thought. ■

Warm Regards

*The Editor*

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Thank you.