



11 Habits That Make You Seem Unprofessional

And What to Do Instead

✗ Don't: Miss deadlines without a heads-up

? Why: It signals unreliability and a lack of respect for others' time

✓ Instead: Use time-tracking tools or systems to stay accountable

✗ Don't: Show up unprepared

? Why: Coming to meetings without notes or questions wastes time and shows a lack of effort

✓ Instead: Review materials in advance and have a plan

✗ Don't: Be hot-headed

? Why: Overreacting to situations, snapping at colleagues, or losing your temper makes you appear untrustworthy

✓ Instead: Pause, breathe, and respond thoughtfully

✗ Don't: Write unprofessional emails

? Why: Typos, overly casual tone, or sloppy formatting can undermine your credibility in some people's eyes

✓ Instead: Slow down and proofread or, if easier, use AI tools

✗ Don't: Ignore feedback

? Why: Failing to heed constructive feedback shows an unwillingness to grow and adapt

✓ Instead: Embrace feedback and demonstrate an eagerness to learn and improve

✗ Don't: Dress inappropriately

? Why: Your appearance communicates your level of seriousness and professionalism

✓ Instead: Understand the workplace culture (especially if going client-facing or interviewing) and dress accordingly

✗ Don't: Frequently show up late

? Why: It makes you seem unreliable and like you don't care about other people's time

✓ Instead: Plan to arrive early and leave extra time in case things go wrong

✗ Don't: Be a bad listener

? Why: Interrupting or zoning out during a conversation shows disrespect and lack of interest

✓ Instead: Maintain eye contact, let people finish, and ask thoughtful questions to understand

✗ Don't: Overpromise and underdeliver

? Why: Failing to meet expectations repeatedly harms your credibility

✓ Instead: Set realistic targets, share them, and work to exceed them

✗ Don't: Overstep boundaries

? Why: Oversharing your own personal matters, or getting too familiar too soon, can make the other person uncomfortable

✓ Instead: Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and be mindful of others' comfort

✗ Don't: Fail to take responsibility

? Why: Blaming others for mistakes or refusing accountability damages trust

✓ Instead: Acknowledge your role, take responsibility, and focus on finding solutions