



True Professionalism: The Courage to Care About Your People, Your Clients, and Your Career

David H. Maister

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David Maister, the world's premier consultant to professional service firms, vigorously challenges professionals to examine this essential, yet under-addressed question: What is true professionalism?

Professional firms are forever trying to get their people to act like professionals—to do the right things. Though their various incentives may create employee compliance, these don't often encourage excellence. His answer is clear: It is believing passionately in what you do, never compromising your standards and values, and caring about your clients, your people and your own career. In clear and compelling terms, Maister shows that this approach is not only ethical but also conducive to commercial success.

True Professionalism: The Courage to Care About Your People, Your Clients, and Your Career Details

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From Reader Review True Professionalism: The Courage to Care About Your People, Your Clients, and Your Career for online ebook

Mike says

A good analysis of common problems be-setting the professional service firm. As with all such endeavors the issue of compensation is pervasive, if not defining. I wonder if it is possible to table the issue of compensation and simply work on the problem solving part for the client. In the end, even in a books ostensibly about "professionalism", it is always all about the money.

Andre Crabtree says

I can't help but feel the author is naively optimistic, perhaps he's a humanist and believes in the inherent good nature of people. Odd since Maister is supposedly known as a world renowned consultant on helping professional service firms (law, tax, accounting, etc.). I would have thought that his books would not be filled with you should do this, and you ought to do that.

Maybe it's because Maister does an awful lot of telling and not too much showing. In many of the other good "management" books I read I am not just told what is wrong with current system, and what to do to better manage things, but also why and then proof that it works. I can't help but feel that Maister posits a lot of "wouldn't it be great if..." but never has anything to back it up with, at least nothing other than his name. And an appeal to authority is not what I'm looking for.

Or maybe it's because I work for a professional services firm that professes to like what Maister espouses, but doesn't actually do it. Not sure why. Maybe they've tried in the past (this book is 20 years old) and it didn't work for whatever reason.

It's not all a loss though. I found chapters 13 & 14 good. 13 provides a way to categorize the type of work you (or your firm) takes on, and why you might want to take on different work. 14 goes into how you would calculate profit/engagement in a helpful way so you can get away from simplistic measures like billable, realization, etc.

I've now read 3 of Maister's books and I have to say I think I'm done for now. I'll look for other authors in the field. Perhaps they have something to offer.

Joel Ungar says

An outstanding work. Several chapters have given me some great ideas to start implementing. The beginning analogy is great - he asks professionals what qualities they'd expect in a secretary. Of course, the attributes are what the professional should have, but generally doesn't.

I'd have given this 5 stars if it wasn't for the emphasis in spots on measuring financial results and

effectiveness by reference to hourly billing systems. This book was written in 1997 and perhaps the author has changed his views on hourly billing. I don't believe in hourly billing and using it to measure effectiveness is not relevant.

I have had this book for a while and rue that I didn't read it sooner.

Mike Ncube says

Good book. Worth reading again

Mark says

Maister is the best writer on professional services firms, and this book is the "Why" to go along with the "How" of his MANAGING THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRM. Consultants, lawyers, accountants, and other professionals, especially those who work in larger firms, will find this book useful for orienting themselves and their people on what should be the more important parts of their work: their clients, their firm, and themselves. (I always felt there was a missing section, however, on teams and followers, especially since professionals seem not to be very good at developing their people, and yet those same people are the keys to future success.)

Kim Gonzalez says

Not just for consulting...for servicing any clients or customers.

mdy says

Every time I return to this book, I read some new gem or insight that resonates with me.

Earlier in my career, the first section (Mostly About You) was particularly helpful and inspiring. As I took on management responsibilities, the latter sections (Mostly About Your Firm and Mostly About Your Clients) became more important.

Chris says

Portions a recap of previous Maister books, but relays some effective and potent philosophies on holistically defining your business and career (looking past the numbers, understanding the dynamics at play). Good food for thought...

Eric says

So I am reading this book for my ethics class and found many of the chapters dry but interesting. I don't suggest anyone sit down to read this in one sitting, you will fall asleep. But it is good to read when you are doing some self contemplation.

Ray says

The best ever.

Kzryszthof says

El libro fue escrito en 1997 y todo lo que dice es sabiduría repetida una y otra vez que ya suena poco interesante aunque no deje de ser cierta. Me pareció aburrido y monótono y creo que se le notan los años.

Scribble Orca says

David Maister addresses the psychology behind professional services firms, explaining what makes partners tick, the business model that generates the most profit, how to effectively and efficiently manage labour resources, and what are the necessary ingredients for long-term, repeat-business relationships. This is a must-read for anyone working for or consulting to professional services partnerships.

Paul W says

This classic book by the "premier consultant to professional service firms" is a must read for anyone working in professional services. Maister starts out by noting that the problem is not in figuring out what to do. Rather the problem is to find the strength and courage to do what we know to be right.

He then articulates and explains some key ideas:

The primary focus must be on relationship building

Show a sincere interest in clients' affairs and a sincere desire to help them

Excellence in client satisfaction is an enforced standard

Excellence in managing people is an enforced standard

Team work is mandatory, not optional

Maister's core message is: Believe passionately in what you do; never compromise your standards and values; and care about your clients.

Timely words of wisdom for any professional.

Sergei_kalinin says

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Bruce Fieggen says

Good stuff