

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## Professionalism in Action

More than a decade after we made the Code of Excellence a priority, it is being used in every branch and every district of the IBEW.

The Code is a declaration of the core values—safety, professionalism, accountability, relationships and quality—that have driven our union for more than 125 years and will build our future in the 21st century.

Our members do a variety of jobs, from linemen to aerospace engineers to lawyers to custodians. It would be easy to focus on getting the job done “correctly” and think that speaks for itself.

But we’re the IBEW. Competence in our work is the minimum to get on the field; excellence is how we win the game.

One of the difference makers is the second value: professionalism.

**A 2015 Angie’s List member survey showed that when customers expressed dissatisfaction, 80 percent of the time, their complaint was a lack of professionalism.**

Professionalism is independent of the job title or the individual assignment. It is how we show up on the job: our attitude, our dress and the language we use.



Implementing the Code doesn’t mean labor will always agree with management, but our professional attitude paves the way for a solutions-driven outcome.

What it does mean is that we can identify and solve problems in a timely and professional manner.

There is plenty of evidence that valuing cooperation, customer service and effective communication pay off. In Las Vegas at NV Energy, the professionalism of the utility workers at Local 396 is leading to work for the construction members at Local 357.

Local 396 President Shannon Skinner has worked for the company for nearly 25 years. She’s noticed a change for the better since the Code of Excellence was implemented.

“I think it’s mutual respect,” she said. “We work together and we have a common goal, to serve our customers here in Nevada in a productive manner. We’re professionals, they’re professionals. When we work together, it

just doesn’t get any better.”

What we’re doing with the Code isn’t just about making this workplace or that workplace better.

We’re proving in practice that we can build a different kind of economy that says employers and unions are partners in prosperity.

“The Code of Excellence is a reminder the IBEW has the best workforce anywhere, and we back that up,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “To see an industry leader like NV Energy wholeheartedly embrace it is extremely gratifying, and we hope it convinces other utility companies to do the same.”

Employers hire the IBEW because they know every one of us is competent to get the job done; they hire us again and again when they see that we get it done with professionalism.

What does professionalism do for your branch? Turn the page to find out.



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



# Professionalism is the Key to Future Construction Jobs

The IBEW already boasts the best trained electrical trades workers in North America. If you have a journeyman ticket, there's no job that you don't know how to do. For decades, that was enough to keep the books clean.

Today, we need to offer more. Every member has the opportunity and responsibility to exceed our customers' expectations.

Our jobs, albeit extremely rewarding, are often dirty and difficult. But our standards of professionalism aren't that different from the expectations of a top CEO or lawyer.

How we show up every day on the job defines who we are as IBEW members. We are on time at the beginning of the day and getting back to work after our breaks. Vince Lombardi's idea of on-time is the standard we set: "If you're not 15 minutes early, you're late."

IBEW members demonstrate our professionalism on the job with respect for company tools, property and work rules. Respect builds trust, trust wins contracts and contracts help us to provide for our families.

While it may be impossible to come up with a single definition of what professionalism looks like on the job, we all



know what it looks like when people fall short. That's why IBEW members hold a sense of pride and self-respect. Professionalism is a statement about our personal integrity and organization. It demonstrates our concern about the projects we work on and the pride we take in knowing we've done our best work.

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Eaton is the first manufacturing company to attach an IBEW Code of Excellence sticker to its products. The program is a partnership with Local 3, which has 45 members working at the Hicksville facility.



Positive changes brought by the Code of Excellence led to System Council U-4 and Florida Power & Light winning a national award for its service reliability, which exceeded 99.98 percent.