

Being Professional in all Situations

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Over the past few months, RECA has seen an unprecedented increase in complaints from consumers regarding unprofessional behaviour from licensees. Complaints have included the use of profanity, rudeness, and yelling by industry professionals. Unprofessional behaviour like this undermines public confidence in the industry, harms the integrity of the industry, and brings the industry into disrepute.

It is likely no coincidence that the increase in complaints about unprofessional behaviour has happened as the market in Alberta has taken a significant downturn. In stressful economic times, a calm, professional demeanour can often be the first thing out the door. However, a calm, professional demeanour during hard times can also be the thing that results in you retaining your clients.

Alberta industry professionals have the privilege of self-regulation, and self-regulation means exactly that: regulating oneself. Licensees are expected to ensure they have a professional mindset, demonstrate good character, and remain professional when delivering services to the public, at all times.

What does professionalism mean?

Professionalism is a standard of conduct based on ethics that govern the real estate industry. Professionalism means:

- Fulfilling fiduciary obligations and acting in the best interest of clients
- Providing competent business services to the public, with integrity
- Being knowledgeable in your area of practice, including legislative changes, and relevant legal or practice considerations
- Acting ethically at all times
- Being accountable and taking responsibility for your actions
- Meeting obligations when dealing with personal or confidential information
- Treating RECA, clients, industry professionals, and third parties with civility, respect, and professional courtesy
- Putting the interests of your client, the profession, and public interest above your own.

Industry professionals have the primary responsibility for effective self-regulation. Your standards of conduct and business practices collectively determine the value and integrity of the industry. Industry professionals are ultimately accountable for their conduct to clients, colleagues, and RECA.

Saskatchewan comments on this article

SREC has also seen an unprecedented increase in complaints regarding unprofessional behaviour. Almost half of complaints received by the Commission involve a lack of professional courtesy and/or poor quality of service. Complaints led to investigations, possible reprimand(s) and sanction(s). This takes time from you and your broker away from dealing with clients. This is a difficult way to learn a lesson and such incidents leave a permanent mark on these individual's records and follow them when they apply to work in other jurisdictions.

Not everyone can keep calm in stressful situations. Slow down and try not to react immediately. Instead take some deep breathes and bite your tongue if you have to. If possible, excuse yourself for a minute or two and try to collect your thoughts.