

## Personal Branding Series: Your Professional Image

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** My name's Leanne Ralstin, and I am a career consultant here with the Carson College of Business. And this, our guest here is John Hale. And I'll let him introduce himself.

**JOHN HALE:** Hi, everybody. I'm John.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** And where do you work, John?

**JOHN HALE:** I'm a WSU graduate, have been in business-to-business sales for 30 years. I'm with a company based on the west side of the mountains called Preferred Business Solutions. We do managed IT, IT solutions, copiers and printers, and mailing and folding equipment.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Oh, welcome. So we have across the board here, from freshmen to post-bac. And welcome, everybody, to our workshop. We're going to talk about professionalism here.

I know we have a couple of freshmen here. Have you been out in the work world? Do you even have any ideas of what it means to be a professional?

**AUDIENCE:** Not completely.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Not completely? What's some of your ideas?

**AUDIENCE:** Well, to be a professional in the real world, I'm not really sure.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK, so learning what it is, then-- is that what you're hoping to find out?

**AUDIENCE:** Yeah.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK, what about you?

**AUDIENCE:** Kind of the same thing.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Same, OK. Any thoughts of what you wanted to learn or find out tonight?

**AUDIENCE:** So as an accounting major, I understand why it's really important how to learn how to act professional. And I want to learn how to do it properly, and also when you go out networking with other people. But I'm really still not really good at that, so how to network?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** How to network?

**AUDIENCE:** Yeah.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK, yeah, great. Well, as you all know, you're students here. You're education's really important, and it's great that you're here. But to really launch out there in the professional world, you need to learn what it means to be professional. So the next question is, what is professionalism? So any other thoughts on that topic there, John?

**JOHN HALE:** But as far as professionalism, I don't think there's anything insightful or anything that you don't already know. You know a lot more than you think you do. As far as-- I mean, you've been involved with social groups and groups your entire lives. You've been involved in classroom activities and sports teams and clubs and groups your entire life.

And a lot of it, as far as professional, a lot of it has to do more than character and attitude than it does about a specific set of skills. I mean, be nice to people. Treat them with respect.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** That's honestly a lot of what it boils down to there, John. Some of the things that we will talk about, like he mentioned, was character and attitude, but also the skills, virtual image, appearance and dress, networking and etiquette. These are just some of the topics we'll talk about tonight.

OK, skills, they're important. You're going to learn a lot of skills while you're a student here, we hope. If you're a good student, you're going to learn lots of skills. But don't think that you know it all.

When you get into the professional world, you're the beginner again, just like you were when you started school. You're the beginner. And like Albert Einstein once said, the only thing more dangerous than ignorance is arrogance. You learn a lot here, but you don't know it all. You're just at the very beginning.

And one of the best things you can do as far as being a professional is be willing to learn. If you're willing to learn, employers love that. So--

**JOHN HALE:** If you get asked a question, don't be afraid to say, I don't know. That's a really good question. I don't know. Let me find out the answer and get back to you, and kind of keep moving forward. I mean, there's nothing wrong with saying, I don't know or I'm not an expert on that. So it's a lot better than trying to make it up.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** That's very true, John. OK, so your virtual image, you want to talk about this?

**JOHN HALE:** Yeah, so I mean, a lot of this stuff I think is common sense. But as far as your online presence, I mean, what do you have out there, whether it's LinkedIn or Facebook or whatever social media? What do you post?

What kind of things do you say as far as making statements, especially something-- I mean, if somebody could take offense to it or have a difference of opinion that could keep you from

getting an interview or keep you from getting a job, keep it to yourself. If somebody specifically asked you straight up, then don't be afraid to deflect the question.

And a lot of this is a picture's worth a thousand words. And what are the pictures you're putting out there on social media? I mean, something we were talking about earlier, you have pictures. You've got pictures with you and your friends, 10 of you standing around the room, everybody's arms around each other, and there's a drink in every hand. Does that need to be posted on social media?

Imagine the exact same picture without the alcohol, without the beer cups. It's a completely different picture. It looks like friends having fun versus your fraternity party.

So don't be afraid, especially even now-- I'm conscious of that and have been conscious of that for a long time. You take a group shot. Move the drinks off the table. I mean, you're still a Cougar, so the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. But be conscious of that and just put that stuff away when you're posting that.

I mean, it might be a great picture for your friends, but I guess I'm speaking specifically to the people that are going to be looking for internships and looking for jobs. When I sit and I get resumes in and I'm interviewing-- I'm interviewing right now for open sales and marketing positions.

But one screen's open is the resume, and the other screen's open, and I'm looking them up on LinkedIn. I'm looking them up on Facebook. And that LinkedIn and that Facebook is, OK, now am I going to call this person? Am I going to call that person?

So a lot of it, I just go right on there, more on LinkedIn than Facebook. LinkedIn is-- what does their profile say about them? What do other people say about them? Just, is it a professional appearance? And that's a big part of it.

So just be aware of that. And I'd start that your junior year. Start to clean some of that stuff, get a public image out there. We talked a little bit about-- you want to go onto cell phones?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yes.

**JOHN HALE:** OK. Everybody's got a cell phone, right? We all have it. We all, frankly, are on it constantly. I mean, I was joking with Leanne that I probably get 200 emails a day. It might be more on some days.

If I go 45 minutes or an hour without an email, I assume something's wrong and I'll send an email to myself, making sure that there's not something wrong. But if you're like that or you're out in the world, if you're on an interview or you're out in a social setting or any kind of interview, you don't need to be on your phone all the time.

And if you go into an interview or a meeting, turn it off and leave it in the car. I mean, it's one thing to go on a break and step out into the lobby and you check your cell phone or send a text message or whatever. But if you feel like you constantly have to be checking your cell phone every 20 or 30 seconds-- like, if you have something more important to do than to be in that job interview or be in that internship interview, then you should probably go do it.

But just be aware of what that looks like. If you've got something important, you've got to, hey, I'm expecting an important call from a family member. I've walked into business meetings like that and say, I'm sorry. I'm going to leave my phone on. I'm expecting an important phone call from a family member. That's fine.

But other than that, something really out of the ordinary, don't be afraid to just turn your phone off, leave it your pocket and pretend it doesn't exist for 45 minutes.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, nothing worse, I don't think, than going into a meeting and seeing people on their cell phones, texting their friends. And that's very rude to the presenter, honestly. And it shows disrespect. And when you're in a business meeting, you don't want to show disrespect, for sure.

And also, another thing is be judicious about who you give your cell phone number to. Don't give it to just everybody. Certainly if you're, for instance, in sales, maybe you use your cell phone for sales meetings and talks. But be aware of who you're giving the message to to go.

OK, so etiquette-- one of the main things about etiquette is remember how your mother would teach you to say thank you and please? Those apply in the business world, just that basic etiquette. Say please and thank you. Be respectful to others, and not differential. And I'll have John talk a little bit about what he means by that.

**JOHN HALE:** Yeah, so I mean, be respectful to somebody, if somebody five years older than you or 50 years older than you. I mean, being respectful is one thing, but this isn't the sage up on the mountain that you're climbing up to get the advice from. Treat them with respect, but still treat them like a person.

Don't be afraid to talk to them like they're your friends. You clean up the language a little bit, but don't be afraid to just have a normal conversation with them and get to know them as a person, talk about them. The personal relationships-- and we're going to get into this a little bit more. But do I like this person? Can they help my business?

I mean, I've managed and been in sales for 30 years, and that's a big part of whether or not you get invited back for a second appointment. Do I like and trust this person? Can they help my business?

And that's not all just on a salesperson. That could be on anything, but that's going to be the difference between you get invited back to the second interview or not, just do I like and trust this person. Do I think they can help me going forward?

You don't get caught up. And it's like, the interview process, they have four or five candidates. They're talking to you today and hoping to get two good people out of there. That's one of many things they have going on.

So it might be the most important thing you've got going on and you should treat it accordingly. But it may not be for them. They may have a bunch of other irons in the fire and other things they're doing.

So as far as the follow-up, don't be afraid to-- if you talk to them, don't be afraid to tell them, hey, I'm really interested in this position. Don't be afraid talk to them in some plain English and don't wait for this phone call to come back or the email to come back or whatever. Talk to them like a normal person, but be the best version of yourself.

We talked about being the first date version of yourself, the please and thank you. And treat them with respect. How do you act if you're meeting your girlfriend's grandmother? I mean, be polite. Be respectful. Take interest in the people that you're talking to. Does that make sense?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, asking questions, be interested. Do your homework ahead of time so that you have some questions to ask. And pay attention if you're in a new work place. What is it, things that you don't know? Ask questions.

And again, going back to the thing of if you don't know something, just say, hey, I don't know. But do be engaged. That's the main thing with interacting with people.

**JOHN HALE:** In an interview setting or a sales setting or any kind, almost a sure way of not getting invited back is at the end of the interview or as we're getting to the end, do you have any questions? Like, no. No basically means I haven't done enough research prior to this to really have any idea what we're talking about. I mean, I'm just kind of faking my way through the interview.

So you should have good questions and understand both what the company does, and then what does that person do? Because the fact that the company does this but if you're talking about an HR position or an accounting position, the day-to-day activities of what that person does could be very, very different than whatever the face of the company or what the company's known for.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Exactly. Yeah, there's all different jobs in every company, for sure.

**JOHN HALE:** Absolutely. So understand that, and do some research on understanding who the person is you're talking to and what the daily activities are of what they do.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** And that brings us to conversation. What do you talk about in the workplace setting? What kind of conversations do you have?

Do you think you'd talk about religion? What about politics? Some of you are like, uh. Yeah, those are sticky topics. Maybe you wouldn't want to talk about those things. Do you want to talk about some things they could talk about there?

**JOHN HALE:** That's a lot of it, but I mean, a lot of this go through-- and it says in here, like, practice these conversations. So if somebody says in your interview, so what do you think of this stuff that-- what's going on with Trump? And you might be the biggest Trump opponent or the biggest Trump proponent, but you say, sometimes I don't know what to think.

I think all sides-- you kind of need to come up with a vague answer or answer a question with a question. Say, I'm not sure what to think. I mean, he's 200 days into office. What do you think?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, that might be a little safer, wouldn't it?

**JOHN HALE:** Right, I tell you, to go back there-- and it's a sales answer to answer a question with a question. But I mean, just stay away from religion and stay away from that. And you may not have-- I assume most of the people here-- I actually assume-- are big Cougar football fans. There's somebody here that's probably in this room-- is there anybody here that's not a big football fan? It's OK.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Not a big football fan?

**JOHN HALE:** Not a big football fan, but if somebody asked you, with the exception of Friday night, yeah, the Cougs have been a great thing. What do you think about Cougar football? Let's assume you know nothing about it. I mean, I know that they wear red shirts and gray pants, and that's about it.

But have an opinion. Part of this, you might say, well, I don't know. I'm actually not a huge football fan, but I love how the campus is excited on game days, or I love the sense of community that it puts everybody in.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah.

**JOHN HALE:** So you can have a strong opinion that doesn't necessarily-- I mean, you don't have to be an expert on football. Or if you talk about arts or sports or music, or if somebody asked you, hey, I went to a concert, and it's a style of music you don't know like. Have you ever seen them? No, I never have.

Or what style of music do you like? Maybe you have a couple of different opinions. You like all genres. My couple favorite artists are this, but you might have a politically correct answer in addition to-- you can have a strong opinion, and then your kind of politically correct answer too.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, just be aware of your audience, basically. One of the things that you shouldn't do in a professional setting is gossip about your coworkers. It's fine to talk with your coworkers, have conversations with them, like on sports or art, literature, music, whatever.

But you don't want to gossip. And by gossip, I mean, did you hear that so-and-so did that last weekend? That's not positive. It's not a positive way to build good relationships with your coworkers. I recommend you just don't gossip. Don't gossip. But you can certainly have conversations with them.

Dining etiquette, have any of you ever gone to one of those etiquette dinners that they have occasionally? No? They teach you which fork to use, which spoon to use, where to put your napkin, that sort of thing. If you've never gone to one of those, I suggest that you do. They're kind of fun. It's usually a great meal, and you learn things like that.

Which fork do you use when there's three of them sitting there? How do you take a bite? And it's something that you hate. What do you do with it? Learn dining etiquette, just basic etiquette-- not that you're always going to be dining with the king or queen of England or whatever, but certainly, learn what's proper in any given situation.

**JOHN HALE:** And even something like that, even something as simple as you say I'm going to go out to dinner with three or four friends and say, we're all in the position we're interviewing for jobs. Let's go out as though it was a business dinner, even to the point of dress.

I mean, I see a lot of definitely people that are graduating that are interviewing in a coat and tie. This person does not look comfortable in a coat and tie. They don't-- yeah, it just doesn't look comfortable.

So put yourself-- if that's uncomfortable to you, or a social setting where you're going to go out and have dinner with five people that are all 25 or 30 years older than you, as much as you can, practice it. Go out to dinner. If you've got some family members or extended family members, go out to dinner one time with your parents and a couple other friends. First of all, they're probably going to pick up the tab. But go put yourself in that situation because you'll be a lot more comfortable if you go into it a couple times.

And if ever you go through the interview process, at some point, might you go out in a situation where it's dinner or drinks or go out for happy hour through an interview or in an internship? If it's an interview process, do you think it's accidental they put you in a situation where there might be alcohol present?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Why do you think an employer would put you where there's alcohol? Any ideas?

**AUDIENCE:** Because usually, people like with alcohol, they see how you can control yourself, not drinking too much, and then--

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Exactly.

**AUDIENCE:** They can judge you, your attitude, basically.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Did you hear that, John?

**JOHN HALE:** It's a little bit-- yeah, I think it was that they want to see just how you react around alcohol. Do you go out and you act like it's-- it's not free beer. You're not going out to let me see if I can have six beers as fast as I can drink them.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** No, it's not a chugging contest.

**JOHN HALE:** Yeah. So if you go out in that situation, I mean, they might be doing it to see how you conduct yourself because you might be in a situation where you're sociable, you're entertaining customers, where you're entertaining clients, where you're going out in social settings, lunches, or dinners or whatever. And they want to see how you react to see how you carry yourself. And there's nothing wrong with having a drink or two, but I can't imagine a situation like that-- even more than two, especially if I was in an interview process.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Exactly.

**JOHN HALE:** And there's some of those-- I mean, E & J Gallo Winery used to interview big on campus. They did when I was there, and I think they're still doing it now. That was one of the more prestigious jobs you could get coming out of the marketing or the business school.

But that's a situation for obvious reasons-- they're in settings a lot where you're out with alcohol. You're obviously selling wine and liquors, but they're out in social settings where they're taking on clients and entertaining them, and they want to see how do you react around that.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Professionalism also includes dress. And John put this picture of an iron. Do you guys know what these are?

**JOHN HALE:** Are you guys familiar with this machine? And I am talking more to the men than to the women. But do you know how to iron a shirt? Because you're going to have to prove it if you go into a job with a shirt and tie, if you go out in the work environment. I mean, jeans and a t-shirt on Saturday and jeans and a t-shirt in a work environment are different. The big difference is they're probably cleaner and neater and ironed.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** For sure. Yeah.

**JOHN HALE:** So I said to be funny, but I can't believe even today how many people in business I'll see, especially young people in business, and they'll go in. I don't think anybody knows my



shirt isn't ironed. They'll notice, and it reflects back on you-- you can spin it into, well, maybe this person isn't prepared. Maybe it's a lack of professionalism.

Take five minutes, learn to iron your shirt. Or find a place in your neighborhood for \$2. Every neighborhood on the planet has a place you can get your shirts dry cleaned and pressed. It's the best \$2 you can spend every day.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** And the reason why we're emphasizing dress a little bit is first impressions can be lasting impressions. Like John just said, if you come in with a wrinkled shirt, they'll think you just didn't take time, that you don't pay attention to details.

Is dress the only thing that they should be focused on? No, but it is a first impression. So part of that is understanding the environment that you're in. And I'll let John speak to this a little more.

**JOHN HALE:** If you're going out into a business environment-- I mean, don't wear a tux to the baseball game. But understand where you're in. And if you're not sure how you should dress, err on the side of overly formal.

Even if, men, you show up in a coat and tie and you realize everybody else is in jeans and a t-shirt or jeans and slacks, you can take off the tie. You can take off the coat and dress it down. It's really difficult to dress up an outfit. Women, I think, are a little bit easier because there's a little more flexibility. I think women, as a general rule, can be a little more casually dressed as long as it's well done.

And all your clothes-- I mean, neat, pressed, tailored. By tailored, if you bought a suit you were a freshman and now you're a senior and you gained 20 pounds or lost 20 pounds, suit maybe doesn't fit quite as well as it used to. Get it tailored or the pants hemmed correctly. Take the time to make sure that everything's done right.

I had an interview, and I still remember this guy. He probably borrowed this suit from somebody that weighed 100 pounds more than he did.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Oh, wow.

**JOHN HALE:** And it's like, are you kidding? Like, I mean, it was like a blanket on the guy. And it's like, either he lost a lot of weight, which I strongly suspected-- but this coat was not cut for him, and he just didn't look the part.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah. Make sure your clothes are well taken care of. Generally, rules of thumb are if you're in an interview situation or the workplace, most workplaces-- well, a lot of office workplaces, let's put it that way-- dress, slacks, or a skirt. Ladies, if you're wearing a skirt, at least knee length. You don't want the short skirts-- dress, blouse, or a dressy shirt.

A blazer or cardigan really bumps that up a notch. Wear socks, basically. And closed-toe shoes in most workplaces. Sometimes some workplaces, you can wear sandals or open-toed shoes. But as a rule, most workplaces like you to wear closed-toed shoes.

Minimal or understated jewelry-- if you're used to wearing a ring on every finger, maybe bump that down a little bit. You don't need jewelry. That's big statement purposes, especially in an interview situation. And I don't see a ton of jewelry on any of you here, but if you did wear jewelry, just like one ring on each hand. A watch or a bracelet is fine, but you don't want anything that's distracting or wiggly.

Conservative use of makeup. You're not going out on the town. And perfume and cologne-- John and I kind of agree here-- skip it, especially for the interview because you don't know if the person who's interviewing you is sensitive.

And if they are, that can cause them to be uncomfortable. Most interviews are done often in small rooms where the air is not real good. And so if they're sensitive to perfume or cologne, it might be overwhelming for them. So I would just say skip it.

**JOHN HALE:** Does anybody remember sitting next to somebody that didn't wear cologne or perfume? Does anybody remember sitting next to somebody that wore too much cologne or perfume?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, for sure.

**JOHN HALE:** Everybody's been in that situation. And it's the eye-- the other person's the judge of what's too little or what's too much, not you. And sometimes, you might have a tendency to spray it on right before you walk in the door.

Well, you don't smell it yourself, but definitely err, as far as colognes-- and there's some people that do have allergies or do have sensitivity to fragrance. And whether that's your problem or not-- if it's their problem and you're wearing too much cologne, it's become your problem during the interview or any kind of setting like that.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** For sure.

**JOHN HALE:** That make sense?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Any questions so far? Is there a question? OK?

**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** Yeah. So we have a couple questions. One is, do interviewers find it to be a red flag if you can't find the person at all, like on social media, if they don't have a LinkedIn and they don't want social media?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Do you want to answer that since you're an employer?

**JOHN HALE:** If they don't want social media?

**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** If they don't use social media and they don't have a LinkedIn, is it a red flag for the employer?

**JOHN HALE:** I don't know about a red flag. But they should have an online presence. They should have a LinkedIn, even if it's-- I mean, if you talk to somebody that's in their mid-20s or younger, you're not going to have a long LinkedIn resume. But you should exist on there. Make sure that the profile that's there matches the resume. I think it's almost a requirement now to have a LinkedIn profile.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK. Thank you, John. We'll move on here to conduct. One of the things that you should be aware of, do you have any nervous habits?

I admit I have one. You know those pens with clickers? I have literally destroyed clicker pens because I'll be sitting there clicking it and twisting it until it just, like, explodes, and I didn't even realize I was playing with it. So I have worked on this by not even having them near me if I'm in an office situation. I just don't even put them close to me.

But you might have other habits. You might have a habit of playing with your hair or your fingers or something. Be aware of those when you're in an interview situation and in the workplace. Also be aware of your posture-- sitting up straight, just simple things like that. It's not lounging time.

And body language, are you looking like you're interested in whoever's there in front of you, or are you acting like you're really bored and just kind of looking around? Think about these things when you're in the workplace. And John mentioned this part a little bit previously about practicing, but I'll let him speak more to it here.

**JOHN HALE:** Well, I mean, some of this, if you're not comfortable yet in that environment, put yourself in that situation. Call an older friend or somebody that's on an internship with a coat-and-tie job and say, hey, can I come down to meet you for coffee and maybe meet a couple of coworkers? You can just go down there, get dressed for business.

You meet them for coffee for 20 minutes. Talk to them about whatever. Make small talk or whatever. It doesn't have to be a formal interview. See if you can go job shadow with them or sit in on a department meeting.

I mean, if you're really like, hey, I'm not sure what this is about, go down and have coffee at the Starbucks at the bottom of the Columbia Tower or the bottom of a big building in Spokane, and just kind of people watch. Plus, it's kind of interesting. But dress the part and look the part, and go down there and have lunch with a friend at one of the restaurants down there, kind of a business lunch. Go down there and put yourself in that environment.

One, you never know who you might meet. But if you're not totally comfortable doing that, put yourself in that environment. You'll get more comfortable.

It's a little bit like public speaking. A lot of people are not real good at public speaking. Frankly, I'm one of them. But I kind of forced myself to be in situations where I have to do that. And slowly, you get better at it.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Absolutely.

**JOHN HALE:** I'd encourage you now, even. When you get out of school-- I mean, a diploma's awesome, but you're going to get the job based on you, based on your ability to interact one-on-one with the person across a desk. And a big part of your career's going to be based on that, is going to be based on how well you get along with other people.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Absolutely, communication is one of those top things on the qualities that an employer wants. So you need to learn how to conduct yourself in a professional manner and have good communication skills. So moving on to networking-- and you mentioned this is one of the things you'd like to know more about.

Networking's-- you already have a network, whether you realize it or not. Think about who knows you and who you know. And that could just be friends and family right now, but that's OK. That's a start.

And what do they know about you? Do they know you're an accounting major? Do they know you're a nursing major or whatever other major you are? What do they know about you? Do they know you're about to graduate? Do they know that you need an internship? What do they know about you?

And this is something you don't think about much with networking. It's not a one-way street. It's a two-way street. What have you done for them lately? Have you helped them with maybe a community service project? Have you taken them out for coffee? What have you done?

Think about what you would like done for you, and maybe you can do that for them. It goes both ways. Nurture these contacts. Your professional contacts are some that will be with you for a long, long time. And they're people that you choose, so nurture that relationship and make it the best that you can be.

But always act with maturity and integrity with your contacts. Don't be telling them big stories. Don't be not showing up when you said you wanted to show up for coffee and then just not show up. That's not a mature attitude. And developing this is important, and I'll let John talk to this, about building it.

**JOHN HALE:** Yeah, I mean Leanne basically-- I mean, you already have a network. And if you're starting to get into your junior and senior year, and a lot of people-- like if you're like me, I

knew I wanted a career in business, but I had no idea what that looked like. But start to, if you can, put yourself in that situation.

Keep in touch with the friends or friends of friends that are two or three years older than you. And oh, you're getting a job. Oh, you're account executive at ABC Company. That's awesome.

Well, talk to them about, what do you do eight hours a day? What does that job entail? What do you like about it? What do you not like about it?

A lot of people, they get ready to graduate. And I told Leanne a story. It was over about a month ago and talking to a group of seniors that are all graduating. And I asked some job titles people were interested in.

And one person said he wanted to be a financial analyst. And I said, well, tell me about that job. He said, well, I want to analyze finance. Can you tell me more? And not really-- that was about the extent of what he knew about it.

And so tell me about this job. So you're going to come to this job. What time are you going to show up for work? OK, well, about 9:00 AM. This person wants to be a financial analyst, and he's going to show up for work at 9:00 AM.

What happens in the world before 9:00 AM that might hinder his ability to be a financial analyst if he's showing up at 9:00? Anybody? What time's the stock market open?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** 6:00.

**JOHN HALE:** Stock market opens at 6:30 in West Coast time. If he's going to be a financial analyst, he's going to be showing up at work about 5:30 for the rest of his career, at least as far as anything having to do with world finance. Now, the good news, he's probably going to get off at 2 or 3 o'clock on a lot of afternoons.

But just try to get a better understanding if you're looking for a career in business about exactly what that entails and really understand the what do you do eight hours a day, five days a week. You might like a job that has a lot of structure to it.

You might like a job where every day is different or every week is different, or there's a rhythm to it like if somebody's an accounting major. March and April and October are dramatically different for your weekly work than June, July, and August. Hopefully this isn't news to you if you're going to plan to be a CPA.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** OK, so any questions on networking? No? Yeah?

**AUDIENCE:** I have a question.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** I've heard a few tips for sweaty hands when you're out networking. Do the simple little brush on the pants leg sort of thing. But right before the event, wash your hands really well.

And I've heard that using the hand sanitizer helps a little bit. It kind of dries out your hands a little bit, at least for a short period of time. So do you have any tips on sweaty hands and networking?

**JOHN HALE:** I mean, that's specific on that. I mean, maybe address the root cause, not the symptom. I mentioned that I'm not a good public speaker. I'm OK with this. There's 10 people here. But you get into a larger group, especially hey, stand up in front of a group of 200 people and give us a short talk? Not good at that. I wish going back to school, I'd taken public speaking classes.

But if you said, well, I don't want to take a public speaking class, I'm horrible at that. I'm not good at it, and I'm very uncomfortable in that environment. You're a student. That's why they offer them.

Take Speech 101. Take whatever the skill set you need to be in. Take it. Take acting. If there's an Acting 101, put yourself in a situation of something you're not comfortable doing. But you're going to come out of it with a skill set or at least to be a lot more comfortable in that environment than you are today.

I mean, I'm envious of people that can stand up in front of a group of people and be well-spoken. I've got a friend that's very good at it. And I'm just surprised because he's been my friend for 30 years. He still my knuckle-headed 20-year-old friend in my eyes, but he's great at standing in front of a group of 300 or 400 people and talking off the cuff for 10 or 15 minutes and being well-spoken.

But put yourself in that situation. Go to class. Learn to get better at it. You're not going to get better at it overnight, but if you take Speech 101, you'll be significantly better at it after you get out of that class than you were the day you walked in.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** So getting out there and doing it all the more. OK, we'll move on to character. Now, when it all boils down to professionalism, it really boils down to your character.

And when I talked to and interviewed people about what is professionalism to them, they come up with these kinds of words-- people who are reliable, who are mature, who manage time well. These are words that people come up with over and over again when it comes to professionalism.

Now, you might have some of these. You might not have all of these. But it's good to think about how do you think of professionalism and how many of these do you have. So I'll let Jon ask a couple questions here for you.

**JOHN HALE:** So on a lot of that, right, so if you go through on these, they're-- different skill sets are on there. And for each of these, can give an example of a time where you were reliable or accountable or responsible or whatever? I mean, especially if you're a graduating senior, if somebody said-- I mean, I think everything up here, everybody would like to have every one of those skill sets, right? But can you give me an example of a time that you were reliable or accountable?

Or if there's something up there-- is there something up there that maybe somebody's not good at? Hopefully it's not ethical or confident. It's time manager. Let's say, for example, you're not a good time manager.

And I say, hey, are you a good time manager, or can you tell me some examples of times that you've shown that you were? And say, to tell you the truth, I'm not. But can you spin that question into, I'm not, but here's what I've done to overcome that, or here's another skill set that I have that makes up for the fact that maybe that's a shortcoming of mine?

A lot of times during the interview process, they say, hey, tell me a couple things you're great at. What's something you're not very good at it?

And a common thing people-- well, I'm a perfectionist. So I'm too hard on myself to make sure everything's done perfectly. I think 3/4 of the people that I interviewed in my life have been perfectionists. I don't know if that's the case, but get comfortable talking about this stuff and coming up with concrete examples.

Can you give somebody just a short thing, or can you write down a couple of times when you've exhibited each of these behaviors, like really exhibited it in a group of people? Or when did you show that you had integrity? When did you show you acted ethically? Because during that interview process, these kind of things are going to come out.

And I keep going back to graduating seniors. But you're going to get out of school. You're going to have a diploma from an above average university. It's a great university, but you go out in the real world.

And they're, OK, great. Your college degree, you've got a college degree from a school I've heard of. You've kind of checked the box. Now you're going to get yourself the job. It's not going to be your resume, and it's not going to be your diploma. But you have to have those two things in order to get the interview.

Now that you've got the interview, to get you the job is going to be on you, and it's going to be on a lot of these things having to do with character. It's going to have to do, do you play well with others, and can you help my business? Can you help me accomplish whatever task you're bringing to the table, whether it's HR or sales or marketing or whatever? Does that make sense?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** All right, well, we're kind of out of time, but are there any questions? Yeah?

**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** OK, so I have a question. How many questions is a good number of questions to ask at the end of an interview?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** How many questions are a good amount to ask?

**JOHN HALE:** I mean, I don't know that there's a right answer for that. Some of it might be read body language. And somebody says, hey, excuse me, do you have any questions? I said, actually, I do. How much time do you have? Is that a realistic question?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, asking them how much time they have.

**JOHN HALE:** You talked about this. You talked-- and I don't know whether these are extensions of the conversation you've just had. Or I've done some research on wine or talked to friends in the business or whatever, and I do have some questions about this. I mean, I've got a number of them. Is now a good time? What would be the best way for me to follow up? Or tell me the two most important ones.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** When I'm giving out interview tips, I suggest that people who are being interviewed develop quite a list of things that they want to know about the job or the business or whatever. And then they can pick, depending on how much time there is and the interest level of the interviewer, at least three or four questions, I would say. A good rule of thumb, have at least that many still waiting to be asked.

**JOHN HALE:** And maybe if you have questions, there are some-- you don't have to ask everything the first interview or the second interview. I mean, there's some really important things that you care about, like compensation and time off and some other things. Those are really important questions to ask. They're probably not really important questions to ask until you're well down the road.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, those are after the initial interview.

**JOHN HALE:** But those-- I mean, ask about [? the ?] social setting inside the office. What's the environment? What's maybe not the dress code, but maybe you comment on the dress code. I notice everybody's in coats and ties, or there's a lot of people in jeans and sneakers. I mean, is that typical? Is this just because today's Friday?

I mean, have some real thought-out questions and maybe not just something you read about on wine on the way in, but about a new product that's launching today. And ask about the new iPhone 9 I see is launching today. How's that going to affect your business?

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Any other questions?



**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** Yeah, I have another question. Holly says she went in for a scheduled internship interview, and the professional didn't show up to the office for it. What would have been the professional response to it?

**JOHN HALE:** So she showed up for an interview, and the person just stood her up?

**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** Correct.

**JOHN HALE:** I mean, I would have-- however they communicated, whether it was telephone or email, I'd follow up and say, hey, Jim. I had an appointment with you Tuesday at 2:00. Sorry that I missed you. I'd like to schedule a time to get back on your calendar.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Yeah, that'd be a great response, I would think.

**JOHN HALE:** You could go with, hey, bud, have you stood me up? But if you really do want the interview, I'd go with the first one.

**KIRSTIN BULZOMI:** OK, last question, in regards to public speaking, do you have any familiarity with the Toastmasters organization, or do you have any other suggestions of groups or organizations for public speaking and interviewing practice?

**JOHN HALE:** I don't have any experience with Toastmasters, but I have a tone of people that I know. I know when I was growing up, my dad was in Toastmasters. I know at least one of the people that worked for me now is in Toastmasters.

And it's a great setting, from what I understand. For those of you that don't know what it is, it's basically a group of 20 or 30 or 40 business people that get together and rotate a subject where you basically practice giving presentations or practice standing up in front of the group and giving a speech. You might come up and give a rough draft of a presentation you're planning for work.

They might ask you impromptu, hey, if you could, give me a presentation on the state of the economy, or give me a presentation on the state of Cougar football, or give me a presentation on the weather report for the next month. But just, can you do something off the cuff?

But I think that's great. And that public speaking skill is incredibly important, not that you're going to be standing in front of 200 or 300 people all the time, but it really will solve a lot of your problems. If you're not comfortable talking to a group of three or four or five people, you're sitting around dinner and all five people turn to you when a question's asked, that will solve a lot of that if there's anxiety for you around that. Any situation you can put yourself in is a good education, a good experience for you.

**LEANNE RALSTIN:** Any other questions? You're good? All right, well, thanks for coming, everybody.