

Impression Management: Representing Yourself Positively

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A RESEARCH SUMMARY

Psychology of Impression Management (Leary, 2002)

<https://bit.ly/3LCQn5T>

Impression Management is a process used to generate desired opinions in others. We can influence how others perceive us when we believe our public images are relevant to attainment of goals and a discrepancy exists between how we want to be perceived and how others might perceive us.

Why Managing Impressions is Critical and Doesn't Make You Inauthentic

(Kramer, Harris: 2020)

<https://bit.ly/3LEOdTu>

"Impression management requires a keen awareness of who you are, what you are capable of, and the true nature of your strengths and weaknesses."

Effective impression management involves two key elements:

1. Self-awareness
 - o Tune in to the feelings of the people with whom you are dealing and recognize the impressions others are forming of you
 - o Be aware of your skills and strengths to create opportunities for yourself.
2. Ability to adapt how you communicate
 - o Be able to change the way you communicate to influence impressions
 - o Authentically show you're capable of accomplishing what is called for at that moment

"Savvy Self-Promotion" (John, 2021)

<https://bit.ly/3KJHJBC>

"Humility is admirable. But if someone requests information that requires you to reveal positives about yourself, oblige. Research indicates when someone details an accomplishment in response to a question, others don't judge that person as any less agreeable. In fact, if you're asked, "What are your greatest strengths?" or "How did you finish that so quickly?" not answering may make you seem less trustworthy or likable.

Do:

- Earn recognition through consistent performance
- Share when asked
- Share when others are sharing
- Find sponsors and advocates
- Be genuine

Don't:

- Brag
- "Humblebrag" (boast masked by self-criticism)
- "Boomerask" (induce others to give you a self-promotion opportunity)
- Only discuss your successes
- Manipulate

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A RESEARCH SUMMARY, CONTINUED

Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Constructs

(Leary, Jongman-Sereno, Diebels, 2014)

<https://bit.ly/3kBH6iK>

Impression Management Styles (IMS) are varied and based on self-presentation styles identified by Jones and Pittman (1982)

1. **Self-Promotion:** trying to be viewed as competent
2. **Ingratiation:** trying to be viewed as friendly
3. **Exemplification:** trying to be viewed as moral
4. **Intimidation:** trying to be viewed as threatening
5. **Supplication:** trying to be viewed as weak

GC Tip: Is there a dark side to impression management? Yes, there can be. As with all communication strategies, intention and ethics matter. If you use this tool to intimidate or try to fool others, your methods will likely backfire.

How to Self-Promote: The Introverts' Edition (Hutson, 2009, 2016)

<https://bit.ly/3F8VGI2>

- **Sell Yourself:** effective self-promotion is finding the overlap between what you have and what your audience needs
- **Write:** position yourself as an expert by writing for an industry publication or craft thoughtful emails and thank-you notes
- **Host:** when you organize an event, you're seen as a go-to person
- **Speak Publicly:** "Public speaking is an amazing tool for an introvert. We get to prepare, and then we get up there once and reach lots of people rather than having many conversations." (Ancowitz, *Self-Promotion for Introverts*, 2009)
- **Network:** Team with an extrovert at networking events, or approach people who aren't engaged in conversations.
- **Say "Hi":** show interest in your colleagues. Regular communication can land you in the right place at the right time when opportunity unfolds.

We all balance a need for approval from others and self-approval. Taking a valid personality assessment can help you see why it may be challenging for you to be your own advocate.

GC TIP: As Betty White shows in her opening monologue at Saturday Night Live in 2010, you can showcase your achievements AND lift others up along the way.

Here's Betty: <https://youtu.be/Gv3c4pBZYil>

*Always remember you are braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.*

A. A. Milne, English author