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# The Impact of Impression Management Over Time

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## The Impact of Impression Management Over Time

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3 Employees use impression management (IM) to create, maintain, or protect an image  
4 held by other individuals (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). IM has relevance to a  
5 number of important streams of organizational research, including political skill (Harris, Kacmar,  
6 Zivnuska, & Shaw, 2007), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Bolino, 1999), and  
7 organizational politics (Ferris & Treadway, 2012). IM influences important outcomes, including  
8 hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and career advancement (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, &  
9 Gilstrap, 2008). In general, research has focused on how individuals use assertive IM tactics of  
10 ingratiation and self-promotion, or defensive tactics of apologies and justifications, to enhance  
11 their image at work (Bolino et al., 2008). Given that most employees seek to be seen as likable  
12 and effective by supervisors, much of this work has been especially concerned with how IM  
13 relates to supervisor ratings of employee likability and performance.  
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29 Ingratiation describes strategies people use to appear likable, such as flattery, opinion  
30 conformity, and favor-doing (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Studies have found that ingratiation  
31 positively influences career success (Judge & Bretz, 1994) and supervisor ratings of subordinate  
32 likability (Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Liden, 1995; Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997).  
33 Further, ingratiation positively influences supervisor evaluations of in-role job performance  
34 (Ferris, Judge, Rowland, & Fitzgibbons, 1994) and OCB (Bolino, Varela, Bande, & Turnley,  
35 2006). Self-promotion refers to tactics used to appear competent and involves taking credit for  
36 positive events, making others aware of one's accomplishments, and highlighting one's  
37 performance. Studies have found that self-promotion is effective in the context of job interviews  
38 (Barrick, Shaffer, & Deggrasi, 2009; Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Stevens & Kristof,  
39 1995). However, unlike ingratiation, self-promotion negatively relates to career success (Judge &  
40 Bretz, 1994) and evaluations of likability (Wayne et al., 1997). Further, the relationship between  
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3 employee self-promotion and supervisor ratings of employee performance is generally negative  
4 as well (Ferris et al., 1994; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003).  
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8 Apologies and justifications are often used as damage control after a negative event.  
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10 Studies of apologies and justifications have found that they are generally effective in reducing  
11 the blame associated with failure (Crant & Bateman, 1993), improving supervisor confidence in  
12 future failure avoidance (Wood & Mitchell, 1981), and minimizing identity damage (Schwartz,  
13 Kane, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1978). Moreover, apologies positively relate to perceptions of  
14 likability (Gordon, 1996). Thus, when used effectively by employees, apologies and  
15 justifications increase the likelihood that they will be seen by their supervisors as likable and  
16 high performing (Frantz & Bennis, 2005).  
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27 Although prior work has increased our understanding of IM and its effects, it also has  
28 limitations. In particular, most investigations are cross-sectional and examine the relationship  
29 between IM tactics and outcomes (e.g., ratings of likability and performance) in a static way  
30 (Bolino et al., 2008). This is unfortunate because, as suggested by Wayne and Ferris (1990), IM  
31 by subordinates may be very impactful when supervisors are forming initial impressions of a  
32 subordinate and then less important after supervisors have had more time to get to know their  
33 subordinates. Unfortunately, although these authors called for research investigating this point  
34 two decades ago, there has been little attempt to understand how IM may lose its power over  
35 time or with repeated use.  
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48 This paper, therefore, seeks to contribute to research on IM in at least two important  
49 ways. First, we use Graen and Scandura's (1987) dyadic theory of role emergence to develop a  
50 theoretical understanding of how the relationships between IM and evaluations of likability and  
51 performance vary over time. Second, whereas previous studies have generally focused on the  
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3 relationship between IM and outcomes at a single point in time, we conduct a lab study and a  
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5 field study to examine our theoretical argument that IM may lose its impact over time or with  
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7 repeated use. Based on our findings, we outline an agenda for future research.  
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### 10 **The Impact of IM Used Repeatedly or Over Time**

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12 As noted, previous studies have focused on the short-term effects of IM (Bolino et al.,  
13  
14 2008). It is likely, though, that supervisors respond differently to initial attempts at IM than they  
15  
16 do to subsequent attempts. Graen and Scandura's (1987) dyadic theory of role emergence  
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18 describes how relationships between supervisors and subordinates evolve over time. Given the  
19  
20 focus of our research question, this theory is useful for understanding how the repeated use of IM  
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22 over time may influence ratings of likability and performance in the context of supervisor-  
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24 subordinate relationships.  
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29 According to the dyadic theory of role emergence, supervisor-subordinate relationships  
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31 develop in three stages—role taking, role making, and role routinization. During role taking,  
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33 supervisors gather information about subordinates with regard to their abilities, motivation, and  
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35 so on. In this stage, supervisors actively look for meaningful data about the subordinate; for this  
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37 reason, subordinates' IM behaviors are likely to be particularly informative during this first stage  
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39 of the relationship. Next, during role making, relationships between supervisors and subordinates  
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41 become increasingly well defined, and supervisors typically accumulate enough information  
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43 from their subordinates to start making informed evaluations about subordinates based on their  
44  
45 track record. For example, whereas during role taking, judgments about performance might be  
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47 more heavily based on subordinates' claims about their competence, in the role making stage,  
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49 supervisors are more likely to be informed by subordinate's actual performance.  
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In the final stage, role routinization, behaviors that supervisors and subordinates have exhibited during role making have become relatively stable. More importantly, by this stage, supervisors and subordinates both have a good understanding of their respective roles in the dyad, and supervisors have developed a clear impression of subordinates' likability and performance. Accordingly, judgments at this stage should be less susceptible to IM. Drawing upon Graen and Scandura's (1987) theory, we expect that evaluations of likability and performance are more likely to be influenced by IM in earlier stages of relationships than at later stages.

The idea that impressions stabilize over time is not only suggested by the dyadic theory of role emergence, but also is implied in other work. For example, Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell (1993) point out that once impressions form, they are difficult to change. Accordingly, they suggest that IM used earlier in relationships should have a greater impact than IM used later. Consistent with this idea, Cooper (2005) argues that when humor is used as an ingratiation tactic, it should be more effective at the onset of relationships, but less so once relationships have matured; thus, her theory suggests that the impact of ingratiation will diminish over time.

The findings of studies that contrast the effectiveness of IM in the context of job interviews with IM in the context of performance ratings are consistent with the theoretical arguments described above. In particular, meta-analytic investigations indicate that the effects of IM are stronger in the context of job interviews than in the context of performance appraisals (Barrick, et al., 2009; Higgins et al., 2003). This difference is attributable to the fact that interviewing judgments are made in the short-term and based on limited amounts of information, while evaluations of performance are made over a longer period of time and are based on larger amounts of information, including direct observation (Barrick et al., 2009). Similarly, Tsai,

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Chen, and Chiu (2005) found that when job interviews lasted longer, the effects of self-promotion by job applicants became non-significant. Again, they suggest that longer interviews afford interviewers additional opportunities to assess applicants' job-relevant qualifications, which makes them less susceptible to IM. In short, as supervisors and observers develop a deeper sense of who someone really is, they are less influenced by IM in developing judgments of likability and performance.

As discussed earlier, prior research suggests that ingratiation and defensive IM tactics tend to result in positive evaluations of likability and performance. It is expected, therefore, that when individuals use ingratiation, apologies, and justifications early on, it is likely they will be seen as likable and high performing. Later use of these tactics, however, will be less positively related to ratings of likability and performance. Indeed, it is possible that, eventually, the use of ingratiation and defensive tactics might even be negatively related to such outcomes. For instance, people tend to be viewed negatively when they overuse ingratiation (Gordon, 1996). Likewise, defensive IM can provide short-term gains, but such tactics can also produce long-term damage if they are overused (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). Overall, then, ingratiation and defensive tactics of IM should be more positively related to evaluations of likability and performance earlier on than they will be at later points in time.

*H1: Initially, the use of ingratiation will be positively related to (a) evaluations of likability and (b) performance ratings; however, ingratiation will be less positively related to subsequent evaluations of likability and performance ratings*

*H2: Initially, the use of apologies and justifications will be positively related to (a) evaluations of likability and (b) performance ratings; however, apologies and justifications will be less positively related to subsequent evaluations of likability and performance ratings.*

The relationship between self-promotion and ratings of likability and job performance is generally negative (Bolino et al., 2008); however, Jones and Pittman (1982: 242) argued that

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3 self-promotion is less likely to impact judgments regarding performance in the context of longer-  
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5 term relationships because claims of competence are likely to be “tested against the data of  
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7 performance.” For this reason, the negative relationship between self-promotion and evaluations  
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9 of likability and performance should be stronger at earlier stages in relationships than in later  
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11 stages. As an employee’s image becomes less malleable, however, self-promotion should have  
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13 less effect. Therefore, self-promotion tactics should have a greater negative impact on initial  
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15 evaluations of likability and performance than later use will.  
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20 *H3: Initially, the use of self-promotion will be negatively related to (a) evaluations of*  
21 *likability and (b) performance ratings; however, self-promotion will be less negatively*  
22 *related to subsequent evaluations of likability and performance ratings.*  
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## 24 **Study 1**

### 25 **Method**

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29 Participants were 86 upper-division business school students (mean age = 23 years; 51%  
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31 female) at a large university in the northwestern US who received extra credit for participation.  
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33 Over 55% of participants had previous supervisory experience.  
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37 Study 1 was a 2X5 repeated measures factorial design, where participants (playing the  
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39 role of supervisor) evaluated the performance of a male confederate (playing the role of new  
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41 subordinate) who performed an accounting task. A confederate was used so that actual  
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43 performance could be controlled and IM could be manipulated. Participants were randomly  
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45 assigned to either one of four IM conditions (ingratiation, self-promotion, apologies,  
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47 justifications), or a fifth condition serving as a control in which there was no IM. Each  
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49 participant took part in a separate experimental session lasting two hours. At the beginning of  
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51 each session, participants signed a consent form that explained that the study was examining  
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53 various accounting teaching and evaluation methods. The confederate was introduced to the  
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3 supervisor as a psychology student without any previous accounting experience other than some  
4 training the prior week. The subordinate was given descriptions of simple transactions and had to  
5 enter them onto an accounting spreadsheet. The participants were told that they would explain  
6 the task to the subordinate, provide him with accounting “rules” which explain the correct way to  
7 enter the information, and evaluate his performance.  
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15 After giving an overview of the session, the experimenter met privately with the  
16 participant to explain the task more specifically, and to review the accounting rules to make sure  
17 that the supervisor fully understood them. At this time, the supervisor was also given bogus  
18 performance information on the subordinate from the “previous session” so that the participant  
19 and confederate would have at least some basis for interaction before the first trial began. The  
20 supervisor then reviewed and evaluated the subordinate’s performance from this previous  
21 session.  
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32 When the supervisor finished this evaluating task, the evaluation was given to the  
33 experimenter, and the supervisor met with the subordinate to discuss his performance. Next, the  
34 supervisor and subordinate reviewed the accounting rules that the subordinate had “learned”  
35 during the previous session. During this review, the subordinate used IM tactics appropriate to  
36 the given condition (see Appendix for manipulation and manipulation check details). Then, to  
37 begin the first trial, the subordinate was given six transactions to record onto a worksheet. The  
38 subordinate had two minutes to work on the transactions.  
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49 At the end of the first trial, the supervisor completed a survey assessing his or her liking  
50 for the subordinate. The subordinate was also given a survey at this time (a questionnaire  
51 assessing self-monitoring) to alleviate any suspicion on the part of the supervisor. Before filling  
52 out their questionnaires, the subordinate again used IM tactics appropriate to the given  
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3 experimental condition. When the supervisor had completed the questionnaire, he or she was  
4 given a few minutes to evaluate the subordinate's performance. The subordinate again completed  
5 a survey to alleviate suspicion. When the supervisor finished, he or she once again discussed the  
6 subordinate's performance with him and provided him with a new accounting rule which was  
7 incorporated in the transactions for the next trial. The subordinate then began another two-minute  
8 trial. This entire process (supervisor evaluation and feedback, rule review, two-minute  
9 performance trial, subordinate IM, and questionnaire) continued for five trials.

10  
11 At the end of the session, participants were debriefed as to the true nature of the study.  
12 Participants were then asked if they suspected the confederate's role. Four participants (two in  
13 the ingratiation condition, and one each in the self-promotion and apologies conditions) claimed  
14 they had known the subordinate was a confederate, and their data were excluded from the  
15 analyses.

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17 Descriptions of the measures used in Study 1 appear in Table 1.

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Table 1

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## Results

### IM Tactics versus Control Groups

To test our hypotheses, each of the four IM conditions was compared against the control condition across all five trials using multivariate repeated measures ANOVA, which does not require an assumption of sphericity (Bergh, 1995; Maxwell & Delaney, 2004). Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations for supervisor liking and performance ratings for each condition and trial.

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Table 2

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**Ingratiation.** A multivariate repeated measures ANOVA revealed the Condition X Time interaction was not significant concerning supervisor liking. However, there was a significant difference,  $F(1,32)=4.42$ ,  $p<.05$ , between the ingratiation and control groups. The main effect for time was also significant,  $F(4,29)=7.22$ ,  $p<.001$ . Thus, while Hypothesis 1a predicted that the positive effect of subordinate ingratiation on supervisor liking would slowly diminish over time, as shown in Figure 1, ingratiation had a consistently positive effect on supervisor liking over the five trials.

Concerning the effect of ingratiation on evaluations of performance (H1b), the interaction between time and ingratiation was significant,  $F(4,29)=3.71$ ,  $p<.05$ . We examined this significant interaction further by exploring interaction contrasts between adjacent trials (i.e., T1-T2, T2-T3, T3-T4, and T4-T5). Of these, Contrast 2 accounted for most of the variance,  $F(1,32)=9.63$ ,  $p<.01$ , indicating that the significant interaction was largely due to increased performance ratings of the ingratiation group after Trial 2, in comparison with the control group. Contrast 3,  $F(1,32)=3.13$ ,  $p<.10$ , and Contrast 4,  $F(1,32)=3.83$ ,  $p<.10$ , were marginally significant. Contrast 1 was not significant. These results coincide with Figure 2, which shows that ingratiation affected performance ratings most positively after Trials 2 and 4, relative to the control group. Contrary to H1b, then, the effect of ingratiation on performance evaluations actually became more positive with repeated use over time.

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Figures 1 and 2

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**Apologies and Justifications.** Regarding the effect of apologies on liking, only the main effect of time was significant,  $F(4,27)=9.53$ ,  $p<.001$ , indicating that there was essentially no difference in supervisor liking in the apologies condition compared to the control condition; thus, H2a was not supported. While neither the main effect of condition or time was significant for the effect of apologies on supervisor ratings of performance, the interaction of Condition X Time was,  $F(4,27)=3.54$ ,  $p<.05$ . Thus, we examined this significant interaction further by exploring contrasts between adjacent trials. Contrast 2,  $F(1,30)=4.41$ ,  $p<.05$ , and Contrast 3,  $F(1,30)=10.69$ ,  $p<.01$ , accounted for most of the variance, indicating that the significant interaction was largely due to changes in performance ratings of the apologies group after Trials 2 and 3, relative to the control group. Contrast 4 was marginally significant,  $F(1,30)=3.13$ ,  $p<.10$ . Contrast 1 was not significant. These results coincide with Figure 2, which shows that the positive influence of apologies on performance evaluations decreases over time relative to the control group. This finding suggests that, as predicted by H2b, the effect of apologies on supervisor evaluations of performance may wane with repeated use over time.

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Finally, only the main effect of time was significant,  $F(4,29)=3.83$ ,  $p<.05$ , in the test of justifications on supervisor liking (H2a), suggesting that justifications had no influence on this outcome. The interaction of Condition X Time was also not significant regarding ratings of performance; however, the main effect of justifications was marginally significant,  $F(1,32)=3.88$ ,  $p<.10$ . This supports the idea that participants in the justifications condition received higher performance ratings than those in the control condition; as shown in Figure 2, however, the difference between the two conditions was inconsistent over the five trials. Thus, while, as expected, the effect of justifications on supervisor ratings of performance did fluctuate over time, it did not do so in a uniform manner; hence, we did not find support for H2b.

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**Self-promotion.** Although the Condition X Time interaction was not significant, both the main effects of self-promotion,  $F(1,31)=7.34$ ,  $p<.05$ , and time,  $F(4,28)=7.03$ ,  $p<.001$ , were significant for supervisor liking. Thus, as shown in Figure 1, self-promoting subordinates were consistently rated as more likable than subordinates in the control condition across the trials. The interaction was also not significant for supervisor ratings of performance, but the main effects of self-promotion tactics,  $F(1,31)=4.31$ ,  $p<.05$ , and time,  $F(4,28)=2.74$ ,  $p<.05$ , were again significant. As shown in Figure 2, self-promotion led to consistently higher performance evaluations than the control condition across the five trials. Thus, contrary to H3a and H3b, the positive effects of self-promotion did not weaken with regard to either supervisor perceptions of likability or evaluations of performance.

### Discussion

The findings suggest that repeated use of all four IM tactics influences supervisor perceptions. Ingratiation was quite effective, as supervisor performance appraisals improved relative to the control group with each trial in which the tactic was used. In addition, ingratiation also resulted in consistently higher levels of supervisor liking. Self-promotion tactics also had a positive effect on both supervisor liking and performance evaluations, as supervisors consistently rated self-promoters as more likable and better performing than those who did not manage impressions. Neither the repeated use of the defensive IM tactics of justifications nor apologies influenced supervisor liking. Apologies did, however, initially have a positive effect on ratings of performance, but this positive effect weakened over time. Finally, the use of justifications resulted in higher supervisor ratings of performance in each trial, but the size of this positive effect was not consistent over time.

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Contrary to our hypotheses, none of the four IM tactics' influence on supervisor liking changed over the five trials. However, the influence of IM on supervisor performance ratings did vary with repeated use. Indeed, the effect of apologies on supervisor performance ratings weakened over time. Justifications also influenced supervisor ratings over time, but these effects were erratic across the trials. Finally, ingratiation engendered exceedingly higher performance evaluations as the trials progressed. In sum, three of the four IM tactics exhibited differential effects on supervisor perceptions of subordinate performance over time, whereas supervisor perceptions of likability were static across the five trials.

Although our lab study afforded us significant control over extraneous factors, many students did not have experience as a manager or with the task, and students may be unconcerned about subordinate performance relative to a real manager. Furthermore, task performance was fixed, and the interaction between supervisors and the subordinate only lasted for two hours. Moreover, students may be less objective in assessing the performance of the subordinates in this study than in an organizational setting; likewise, most managers supervise multiple subordinates who use multiple IM tactics. Therefore, to extend our understanding of how the four IM tactics influence supervisor perceptions, we also examined the link between IM and supervisor evaluations of subordinate likability and performance in an eight-week field study.

## Study 2

### Method

IM is especially important among service workers (Grove, Fisk, & Laforge, 2004), and our second study took place at two 24-hour sit-down family restaurants in the Midwest belonging to the same national chain. New employees and their supervisors filled out surveys within two weeks of the new employee's starting date, and again eight weeks later.

## Respondents and Procedure

The sample consisted of 45 new employees just hired into waitstaff positions and three supervisors. Each respondent was asked to participate in the study over a period of approximately two months. At Time 1, 29 of the 45 new employees completed the survey (62%), and supervisors provided ratings of likability and performance for 28 of these 29 employees. Due to turnover, the number of new employees remaining at the second data collection period was 24. Of the 24 employees who remained at Time 2, 21 of them completed surveys. Of these 21 employees, supervisors provided ratings of likability and performance for 20 of them. To determine if there were significant performance differences between those who stayed (whose data are used for all subsequent analyses) and those who left (whose data were eliminated), we compared the performance appraisal ratings of the stayers and leavers, and the ratings were not significantly different.

New employees hired as servers were given a survey approximately two weeks after their starting date. This survey assessed the IM tactics these employees used on their job during the previous two weeks. Surveys were also given to each new employee's supervisor at the same time and asked about the supervisor's liking of the new employee and for an evaluation of the employee's job performance. Eight weeks after the initial surveys had been administered, the same individuals were asked to complete a second survey that assessed the same information as the first survey. An eight-week time frame between the administration of the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys was selected because the restaurant owner believed that once the servers had been working for two months, they would be fully trained and experienced.

Details regarding the measures used in Study 2 can be found in Table 1.

## Results

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3 Before analyzing our hypotheses, the IM items from Time 1 were factor analyzed to  
4 ensure they reflected the four IM tactics. First, an exploratory factor analysis using maximum-  
5 likelihood estimation and specifying four factors and a promax rotation was used to examine the  
6 factor structure of the items. The results indicated that apologies and justifications did not load  
7 cleanly onto two different factors; therefore, we specified a three-factor solution. This solution  
8 yielded items that cross-loaded onto multiple factors, so these items were deleted. The remaining  
9 13 items were re-analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum-likelihood  
10 estimation. The CFA indicated that a three-factor model fit the data reasonably well ( $\chi^2=72.01$ ,  
11  $df=62$ ,  $p=.18$ ;  $CFI=.94$ ;  $TLI=.92$ ;  $RMSEA=.08$ ), and all of the items loaded significantly onto  
12 their specified factor. The items, factor loadings, and inter-factor correlations appear in Table 3.  
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Table 3

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33 Table 4 reports the intercorrelations, means, standard deviations, and alphas for the Study  
34 2 variables. To explore whether the relationships between IM and outcomes vary over time, we  
35 compared the relationship between IM tactics measured at Time 1 and outcomes measured at  
36 Time 1 with the relationship between IM tactics measured at Time 2 and outcomes measured at  
37 Time 2 using Raghunathan, Rosenthal, and Rubin's (1996) procedure for comparing correlated  
38 but nonoverlapping correlations via the Z-based Pearson-Filon statistic. The results of these tests  
39 appear in Table 5.  
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Tables 4 and 5

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3 We used partial correlations to partial out effects attributable to the supervisor. At Time  
4 1, the correlation between ingratiation and likability was .34; at Time 2, the correlation between  
5 these variables was -.05. However, even though ingratiation is associated with likability at Time  
6 1 and not at Time 2, the difference between these correlations is marginally significant ( $p < .10$ );  
7 thus, H1a was partially supported. The correlation between ingratiation and evaluations of  
8 performance was .03 at Time 1 and -.01 at Time 2, and these correlations are not significantly  
9 different; H1b, then, was not supported. Consistent with H2a and H2b, there were significant  
10 differences with regard to defensive IM tactics. The correlation between defensive IM and  
11 likability was .44 at Time 1 and .00 at Time 2, and this difference is statistically significant  
12 ( $p < .05$ ). Likewise, at Time 1, the correlation between defensive IM and ratings of performance  
13 was .25, but at Time 2, the correlation was -.10 and these correlations are also significantly  
14 different ( $p < .05$ ). Finally, the correlation between self-promotion and likability measured at  
15 Time 1 was -.01 and at Time 2 was .25; the difference between these correlations is marginally  
16 significant ( $p < .10$ ), thereby providing partial support for H3a. With regard to evaluations of  
17 performance, the correlation with self-promotion was less negative at Time 2 than at Time 1;  
18 specifically, the correlation between self-promotion and performance evaluations at Time 1 was  
19 -.26, and the correlation between self-promotion and performance evaluations at Time 2 was .14.  
20 These correlations, though, are not significantly different; therefore, H3b was not supported.  
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### 45 Discussion

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48 The findings with regard to defensive IM tactics suggest that the stage of the supervisor-  
49 subordinate relationship matters. Specifically, the relationship between defensive tactics of IM  
50 and evaluations of likability and performance was stronger at Time 1 than at Time 2. Further,  
51 although the findings were not completely supportive of this idea with regard to ingratiation, the  
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3 relationship between ingratiation and likability was significant at Time 1, but not at Time 2 (the  
4 difference was marginally significant). Taken together, the results of Study 2 are most supportive  
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6 of the idea that defensive IM tactics lose their efficacy over time.  
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### 10 **General Discussion**

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12 The findings of these studies suggest that defensive IM tactics lose their power over time,  
13 but there was less evidence that ingratiation and self-promotion lost efficacy over time (although  
14 the findings of Study 2 suggest that the relationship between ingratiation and perceptions of  
15 likability may be stronger earlier on in a working relationship). This research is unique in that it  
16 examined the effects of both assertive and defensive IM tactics on both evaluations of likability  
17 and performance ratings, and these relationships were analyzed at multiple points in time.  
18 Accordingly, the findings of our studies extend our understanding of IM in at least two important  
19 ways.  
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22 First, we demonstrate the effects of subordinate IM on supervisor perceptions in the very  
23 early stages of this relationship. In doing so, we offer some clarity to previous studies which  
24 found that IM has inconsistent effects on judgments and evaluations depending on the context in  
25 which it is used. For instance, researchers have noted that self-promotion seems to be more  
26 effective in positively influencing interviewer perceptions of hirability than in influencing  
27 supervisor evaluations of job performance (Higgins et al., 2003). While this finding may be  
28 explained, in part, because promoting oneself is more socially acceptable within the context of a  
29 job interview, our findings suggest that the nature of the dyadic relationship may be equally  
30 relevant. Simply put, interviewers have less information on which to base their evaluations and  
31 are likely to be more influenced by IM than supervisors who make judgments about subordinates  
32 whom they already know well. Likewise, the findings from Study 1 suggest that the effectiveness  
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3 of self-promotion in the context of the interview can also be found in the context of subordinate-  
4 supervisor dyads in the very early stages of the relationship. Indeed, both supervisor liking and  
5 performance perceptions can be enhanced with subordinate IM through not only self-promotion,  
6 but also ingratiation and defensive IM when the two parties are still getting to know one another.  
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8 The findings of Study 2 further indicate that supervisors are more susceptible to attempts at  
9 defensive IM when they are becoming acquainted with their new subordinates than after these  
10 relationships are established.  
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20 Second, the findings across both studies indicate that greater consideration should be  
21 given to issues of time and repetition when examining the link between different IM tactics and  
22 evaluations of likability and performance. In particular, the findings of Study 1 suggest that, in  
23 the earliest interactions between new employees and their bosses, evaluations of employee  
24 performance often change when IM is used. In contrast, supervisor perceptions of subordinate  
25 likability formed following their initial interactions appear to be more fixed. Taken together,  
26 these findings suggest that in early interactions between supervisors and subordinates, IM tends  
27 to more strongly affect performance judgments than perceptions of employee likability.  
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### 39 **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

40 Although this research enhances our understanding of IM in important ways, it also has  
41 several limitations. First, as noted earlier, the findings across the two studies were somewhat  
42 inconsistent. In particular, in Study 1, none of the findings with regard to performance ratings  
43 was significant. This may be explained by the fact that performance was held constant across all  
44 of the conditions in order to achieve greater control in our study. Assuming performance ratings  
45 are fairly objective, and evaluations of likability are more subjective, it is perhaps not surprising  
46 (in retrospect) that our Study 1 results were more relevant to the latter than to the former. In  
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3 future studies, it would be worthwhile to employ research designs that vary performance  
4 systematically across different conditions in a way that might more reasonably allow one to  
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6 examine differences with regard to performance evaluations.  
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10 Furthermore, the findings with regard to self-promotion varied across the outcomes and  
11 studies. In Study 1, subordinates' use of self-promotion positively related to assessments of  
12 likability in the initial trials and then these variables were not significantly related in the  
13 subsequent trials. Although this aligns with the argument that self-promotion loses its efficacy  
14 over time, we expected this initial relationship to be negative (rather than positive). This finding  
15 is more consistent with what has been found in research indicating that self-promotion is  
16 favorably received in job interviews (e.g., Barrick et al., 2009). Given the short duration and  
17 nature of the interaction in our experiment, we may have created a situation that is more akin to a  
18 work sample test used during the selection process. More unexpected was that self-promotion  
19 was unrelated to performance ratings in initial trials and then positively related to performance  
20 ratings in subsequent trials. This finding is particularly surprising given the evidence in Study 2  
21 suggesting that self-promotion used at Time 1 was significantly and negatively associated with  
22 performance evaluations at Time 1, and the use of these tactics at Time 2 was unrelated to  
23 performance evaluations at Time 2. While the latter results were consistent with our hypotheses,  
24 future work should determine whether self-promotion tactics affect likability and perceptions of  
25 performance in different ways depending on the specific context and if these dynamics differ  
26 over time as well.  
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50 Like other studies of IM that have relied upon small samples (e.g., Stevens & Kristof,  
51 1995), our sample size in Study 2 was quite small. As a result, we were limited in the analyses  
52 we could conduct, and it is likely that we lacked power to detect significant effects. For instance,  
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3 the correlation between ingratiation and likability at Time 1 was .31, and at Time 2 the  
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5 correlation between these variables was only .10, which is completely consistent with our  
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7 hypotheses; nevertheless, the analyses indicate that these correlations are not significantly  
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9 different, because we only had data from 20 employees and their supervisor at Time 2. Two key  
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11 aspects of our research design contributed to the small sample size in this study; we needed to  
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13 collect data from newly-formed supervisor-subordinate dyads, and we needed to collect data at  
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15 two points in time. Based on the encouraging findings of this study, researchers should conduct  
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17 additional studies that not only collect data from a larger sample, but also do so in a way that  
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19 rules out alternative explanations regarding performance. For instance, it would be useful to  
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21 assess supervisor monitoring, feedback, and coaching for new employees because this may  
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23 influence subordinate performance; likewise, it would be helpful to account for relevant  
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25 employee skills and experience. Finally, it would also be interesting to get alternative measures  
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27 of performance, including customer perceptions of performance (which are especially important  
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29 in service jobs) or objective measures of performance like tips earned.  
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36 In both studies, IM tactics were used repeatedly over time. It is unclear, though, if it is  
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38 actually repetition or time that is most relevant for understanding the relationship between IM  
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40 and important outcomes. Another possible explanation is that it is the access to relevant  
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42 information about the subordinate that is most important. Our arguments, derived from the  
43  
44 dyadic theory of role emergence, suggest that time and information access are critical variables  
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46 because, over time, supervisors are exposed to more meaningful information about their  
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48 subordinates. However, the tactics themselves might grow less relevant with repetition. For  
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50 instance, acts of ingratiation might be charming initially, but they may lose some of their charm  
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52 or be less appreciated as they continue. Similarly, targets of IM might find it annoying to hear  
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3 others promote themselves, but over time such behavior may become more tolerable as targets  
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5 simply become more accustomed to it.  
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8 A related issue is determining the most appropriate timeframe for examining this issue. In  
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10 Study 1, our experiments lasted roughly two hours. Given the controlled context of the  
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12 interaction and the number of trials, we believe there was sufficient time for the supervisor to  
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14 form judgments about the subordinate's likability and performance. Likewise, as argued earlier,  
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16 the two-month time frame employed in Study 2 seemed appropriate based on our discussion with  
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18 the restaurant owner. However, the time needed for a supervisor-subordinate dyad to move  
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20 through role taking, role making, and role routinization is likely to vary across contexts. In  
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22 particular, opportunities to manage impressions, levels of interaction, and the ability to discern  
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24 true performance may dictate the nature of these effects in future studies. For example, in  
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26 managerial jobs where long-term goals are more typical, IM tactics may maintain their power to  
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28 influence important outcomes over an extended period, and this may be especially true if  
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30 supervisors have relatively limited interaction with their subordinates. But if supervisors are  
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32 exposed to a great deal of information about their subordinates in a short period of time (as they  
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34 were in Study 1), the dyad may move to the role routinization stage relatively quickly, and IM  
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36 tactics may lose their relevance more rapidly as well.  
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43 Therefore, future studies are needed to identify the boundaries of the stages of the dyadic  
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45 theory of role emergence and how that relates to the efficacy of IM over time. More generally,  
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47 we would also recommend that researchers examining IM tactics and outcomes within the  
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49 context of existing supervisor-subordinate dyads control for the length of the relationship  
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51 between the two parties. Ideally, too, future studies should control for the level of interaction  
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53 between the supervisor and the subordinate.  
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### Practical Implications

Maintaining a positive performance image is important to most people in organizations (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). How one should go about this, though, is not always clear. Much research and anecdotal evidence suggest that people should utilize IM in the workplace in order to be perceived as more competent, to be better liked, or to get ahead (Bolino et al., 2008). However, the findings of these two studies suggest that IM is more meaningful in earlier stages of a relationship than later ones. New employees would be wise, then, to recognize this small window of opportunity and to “act” accordingly. At the same time, our research suggests that the potential for IM to backfire, as emphasized in previous studies of IM (e.g., Crant, 1996; Turnley & Bolino, 2001), is something employees may need to be more cautious about in their initial interactions with supervisors than once they have established themselves. Lastly, supervisors should consider the initial influence that IM has on their ability to objectively evaluate their new subordinates.

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Table 1  
*Descriptions and Reliabilities of Measures*

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Study 1

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Subordinate likability (3 items)

Source: Wayne and Ferris (1990; 2 items); Wayne and Liden (1995; 1 item)

Sample item: I like my subordinate very much as a person (Wayne & Ferris, 1990)

Scale Range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .84 across all trials; ranged from .79 to .88

Subordinate performance (7 items)

Source: Developed for this study

Sample item: Dependability - maintains high standards of work and performs all needed work:

Scale Range: 1 (Cuts corners; needs to be watched closely and given frequent reminders); 4 (Performs assigned work and rarely has to be reminded about what needs to be done); 7 (Exceeds expectations; never has to be given reminders about what to do or how to do it)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .88 across all trials; ranged from .83 to .91

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Study 2

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Ingratiation (4 items)

Source: Wayne and Ferris (1990)

Sample item: Praise your manager on his or her accomplishments

Scale Range: 1 (never) to 5 (always)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .82 at Time 1; .87 at Time 2

Self-promotion (6 items)

Source: Kumar and Beyerlein (1991)

Sample item: Make your manager aware of your accomplishments

Scale Range: 1 (never) to 5 (always)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .86 at Time 1; .88 at Time 2

Defensive tactics (3 items)

Source: Developed for this study

Sample item: Apologize for the consequences of your behavior that turned out badly

Scale Range: 1 (never) to 5 (always)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .83 at Time 1; .73 at Time 2

Subordinate likability (same as Study 1)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .92 at Time 1; .83 at Time 2

Subordinate performance (7 items)

Source: Developed for this study

Sample item: This person notices and responds appropriately to customers' needs

Scale Range: 1 (never) to 5 (always)

Cronbach  $\alpha$ : .92 at Time 1; .83 at Time 2

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Table 2  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Likability and Performance Measures for Each Condition in Study 1*

<i>Likability</i>	Trial 1		Trial 2		Trial 3		Trial 4		Trial 5	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control group ( <i>N</i> =17)	4.37	0.45	4.49	0.54	4.78	0.58	4.88	0.51	4.73	0.66
Ingratiation ( <i>N</i> =17)	4.90	0.68	4.88	0.66	5.22	0.75	5.14	0.78	5.22	0.84
Self-promotion ( <i>N</i> =16)	5.13	0.77	5.08	0.91	5.38	0.83	5.48	0.68	5.23	1.17
Apologies ( <i>N</i> =15)	4.69	0.83	4.67	0.68	4.94	0.68	5.13	0.73	4.89	0.97
Justifications ( <i>N</i> =17)	4.65	0.95	4.65	0.74	4.80	0.76	4.82	0.83	4.76	0.93
<i>Performance Ratings</i>										
Control group ( <i>N</i> =17)	4.75	0.76	4.83	0.89	4.61	0.77	4.83	0.82	4.45	0.79
Ingratiation ( <i>N</i> =17)	4.93	0.54	4.96	0.59	5.12	0.75	5.10	0.78	5.06	0.90
Self-promotion ( <i>N</i> =16)	5.13	0.51	5.18	0.63	5.07	0.88	5.34	0.79	5.24	0.90
Apologies ( <i>N</i> =15)	5.07	0.66	4.96	0.63	5.03	0.70	4.83	0.71	4.77	0.99
Justifications ( <i>N</i> =17)	5.20	0.64	5.10	0.68	5.11	0.52	5.14	0.57	5.15	0.81

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Table 3  
*Factor Analysis of Impression Management Items for Study 2*

	Dimension	Factor Loading
Ingratiation		
	Volunteer to help your manager on a task.	0.98
	Let your manager know the attitudes you share with him/her.	0.76
	Praise your manager on his or her accomplishments.	0.64
	Offer to do something for your manager which you were not required to do; that is, you did it as a personal favor for him or her.	0.64
Self-promotion		
	Play up the value of a positive event that you have taken credit for.	0.75
	Try to make a positive event that you are responsible for appear greater than it actually is.	0.90
	Make your manager aware of your accomplishments.	0.60
	Try to take responsibility for positive events, even when you are not solely responsible.	0.72
	Let your manager know you try to do a good job in your work.	0.55
	Try to let your manager think that you are responsible for positive events that occur while you are working.	0.87
Defensive IM		
	Let your manager know you are sorry when you do not perform as well as he or she expects you to.	0.91
	Apologize for the consequences of your behavior that turned out badly.	0.70
	Explain to your manager why you could not have prevented the negative outcome.	0.82

*Note.* Defensive IM items were prefaced by the following phrase: "When things do not turn out as well as expected, to what extent do you:"

*Interfactor Correlations for the Impression Management Items*

	1	2	3
1. Ingratiation			
2. Self-promotion	0.37		
3. Defensive IM	0.60	0.32	

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Table 4  
*Correlation Matrix of Variables for Study 2*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Ingratiation T1	3.07	0.98	(.82)									
2 Self-promotion T1	2.72	0.95	0.30	(.86)								
3 Defensive IM T1	3.78	1.07	0.54 ***	0.42 **	(.83)							
4 Likability T1	3.84	0.88	0.31	-0.01	0.35 *	(.92)						
5 Performance T1	3.57	0.70	0.17	-0.18	0.42	0.72 ***	(.92)					
6 Ingratiation T2	3.07	1.04	0.56 **	0.27	0.53 *	0.50 **	0.09	(.87)				
7 Self-promotion T2	2.52	0.96	0.34	0.29	0.67 ***	0.54 **	0.36	0.53 **	(.88)			
8 Defensive IM T2	3.46	0.79	0.55 **	0.30	0.76 ***	0.40 *	0.16	0.67 ***	0.52 **	(.73)		
9 Likability T2	4.03	1.19	0.36	0.00	0.08	0.59 ***	0.47 **	0.10	0.25	-0.08	(.83)	
10 Performance T2	3.48	0.44	0.04	-0.18	0.09	0.66 ***	0.53 **	0.00	0.02	-0.12	0.66 ***	(.83)

Note. Cronbach's alpha appears along the diagonal in parentheses.

\*p<.10. \*\* p < .05. \*\*\* p < .01.



Table 5  
*Partial Correlations Between Impression Management Tactics and  
 Evaluations of Likeability and Performance at Time 1 and Time 2 in Study 2*

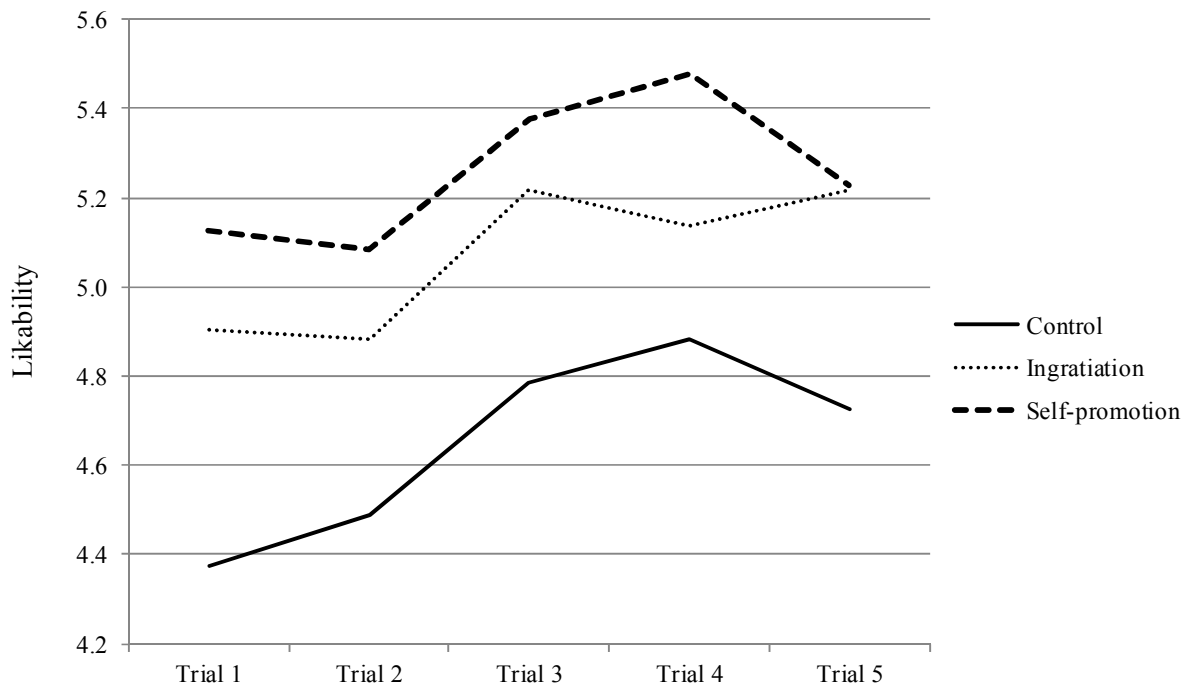
Variable	Time 1	Time 2	ZPF value
<i>N</i>	28	20	
Tactic: Ingratiation			
Likability (H1a)	0.34 *	-0.05	1.59 *
Performance Rating (H1b)	0.03	-0.01	0.17
Tactic: Self-promotion			
Likability (H2a)	-0.01	0.25	-0.85
Performance Rating (H2b)	-0.26	0.14	-1.35 *
Tactic: Defensive IM			
Likability (H3a)	0.44 **	0.00	1.91 **
Performance Rating (H3b)	0.25	-0.10	1.65 **

*Note.* The modified Pearson-Filon statistic, ZPF, was used to test for differences between the outcome variables at Time 1 and Time 2 (one-tailed test).

\* $p < .10$ . \*\*  $p < .05$ .



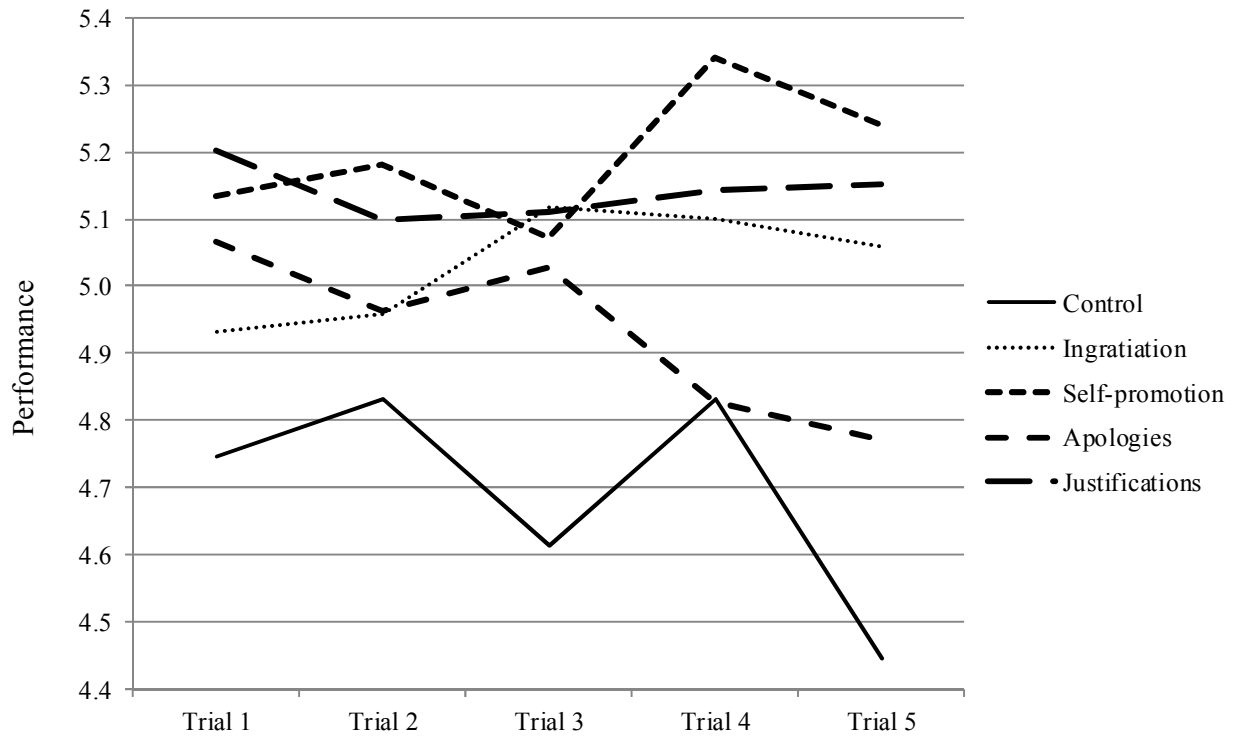
Figure 1  
*Ratings of Likability in Ingratiation and Self-promotion Conditions and Control Group across Five Trials*



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Figure 2  
*Ratings of Performance in Ingratiation, Self-promotion, Apologies, and Justifications Conditions and Control Group across Five Trials*



## Appendix

### Manipulation Details

A confederate playing the role of subordinate performed an accounting task and utilized various IM tactics with the supervisors (participants), who were responsible for evaluating performance. The same person played the role of confederate for all experimental sessions in all conditions. The task was performed for five, two-minute timed trials. Subordinate performance was controlled so that it was the same across the five conditions. The confederate memorized a set of scripted statements for each type of IM. He then used these as appropriate for the condition immediately following each trial and during the feedback sessions. For instance, in the ingratiation condition, the confederate complimented the participant's clothing after the trials (e.g., "I really like your shirt! Where did you get it? It's pretty cool.") and made statements such as, "You are a really good teacher!" during the feedback sessions. In the self-promotion condition, the confederate highlighted his performance by stating, "I was really on a roll on that one; I'm getting pretty good at this," at the end of one of the trials. In addition, statements, such as, "I'm good at numbers" and "I have a good memory," were used in this condition. For apologies, the confederate expressed self-directed blame and regret for poor performance on the trials, such as, "I wish I'd done better on that one; I'll try harder next time" and apologized for behavioral mistakes by making statements, such as, "Sorry, but I must have drank too much pop!" in response to excusing himself to go to the bathroom early. In addition, apologies, such as, "I'm sorry, I feel like I'm letting you down," were used. In the justifications condition, the confederate blamed poor performance on external factors, making statements such as, "I would have done better if my pop hadn't tipped over like that!" Justification statements during the feedback sessions included, "Considering that I have to keep learning new rules, I'm not doing too badly." Lastly, in the control condition, the confederate said very little outside of very basic social niceties (e.g., "hello"; "thank you"; "okay"), and factually responding to the feedback or questions of the supervisor during the session itself (e.g., "Oh, okay" or "I understand").

After completing the five trials, participants were given five questions to assess the effectiveness of the IM manipulation. Three of the four IM conditions were measured by one question each (self-promotion: "My subordinate is highly confident in his/her own abilities;" apologies: "My subordinate is likely to take responsibility for his/her poor performance;" and justifications: "My subordinate blames poor performance on things beyond his/her control"). Ingratiation was assessed by two questions ("My subordinate is highly confident in my abilities;" and "My subordinate is interested in me as a person"). Each question was rated on a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on each item to see if there were significant condition effects. The assumptions for ANOVA, including normality and homogeneity of variance, were met. Each of the ANOVAs was significant, and the means were in the expected direction (means and standard deviations are shown below).

The first two ANOVAs,  $F(4,70)=2.93$ ,  $p<.05$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.14$ , and  $F(4,69)=5.13$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.23$ , respectively, assessed the ingratiation condition. Follow-up contrasts comparing the mean of the ingratiation condition with each of the other four conditions in the column were also significant,  $t_{70}=3.42$ ,  $p<.01$ , and  $t_{70}=3.22$ ,  $p<.01$ , respectively. The next ANOVA,  $F(4,70)=7.54$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta_p^2=.30$ , assessed the self-promotion condition item. A follow-up contrast was conducted to compare the mean of the self-promotion condition with each of the other four conditions within the column. The contrast was significant ( $t_{70}=4.71$ ,  $p<.01$ ). The fourth ANOVA,  $F(4,70)=2.79$ ,

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3  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ , assessed the apologies condition. A follow-up contrast comparing the mean of  
4 the apologies condition with each of the other four conditions was significant ( $t_{70} = 3.16$ ,  $p < .01$ ).  
5 The final ANOVA,  $F(4, 70) = 5.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .23$ , assessed the justifications condition. The  
6 follow-up contrast comparing the mean of the justifications condition with each of the other four  
7 conditions was also significant,  $t_{70} = 3.92$ ,  $p < .01$ .  
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Appendix

Manipulation Check Means and Standard Deviations for Study 1 by Condition

	Manipulation Check Items									
	Ingratiation (1)		Ingratiation (2)		Self-promotion		Apologies		Justifications	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Control	3.300	0.675	2.400	0.699	3.400	0.966	3.600	0.699	2.600	0.516
Ingratiation	<i>3.941</i>	<i>0.748</i>	<i>3.412</i>	<i>0.507</i>	3.471	0.874	3.471	0.943	2.412	0.618
Self-promotion	3.313	0.602	<i>3.188</i>	0.403	<i>4.312</i>	<i>0.602</i>	3.750	0.683	2.125	0.500
Apologies	3.333	0.488	3.000	<i>0.535</i>	2.733	0.884	<i>4.333</i>	<i>0.617</i>	2.067	0.458
Justifications	3.313	0.704	3.000	<i>0.730</i>	3.313	0.793	3.625	0.885	<i>3.125</i>	<i>1.088</i>
All	3.459	0.686	3.054	0.639	3.459	0.954	3.757	0.824	2.459	0.780

Note. Ingratiation was measured by two questions; the other three IM conditions were measured by one question each.

