

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, January 22, 2018

Where: 340 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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Misguided Self-presentation: When and Why Humblebragging and Backhanded Compliments Backfire

ABSTRACT:

The ability to present oneself effectively to others is one of the most essential skills in social and organizational life. In this research, I identify unexamined yet ubiquitous self-presentation strategies—humblebragging and backhanded compliments—that people use in an effort to manage the delicate balancing act of self-presentation. Using datasets from social media and diary studies, I document the ubiquity of these strategies in real life across several domains. In laboratory and field experiments, I simultaneously examine the underlying motives for these self-presentation strategies and others' perceptions of these strategies—allowing for an analysis of their efficacy—as assessed by the opinions targets hold of the would-be self-presenter. I provide evidence from both lab and field to show that humblebragging and backhanded compliments backfire, because they are seen as insincere.