

WROE-ALDERSON LECTURE

SPRING 2018

Robert Cialdini

W. P. Carey Marketing Professor
Emeritus
Arizona State University

Thursday, April 19, 2018
JMHH 245
3:00 PM to 4:20 PM



ORGANIZING FOR SURPRISE

ABSTRACT: A publisher's request to reflect on the roots of his most effective professional efforts led Bob Cialdini to try to identify the programs of research that had proven most fruitful over his career. The outcome was surprising, literally, in that the best work almost always sprang from initially surprising findings. Initially surprising findings, if shown to be reliable and theoretically interpretable by follow-on research, tend to be particularly informative and impactful. Cialdini's presentation considers how it might be possible for investigators to do more than stand ready and waiting for unforeseen phenomena worthy of scientific pursuit but, instead, to organize proactively for surprising effects. He describes which types of research questions and research approaches lent themselves in his own experience to the unexpected results that led to especially successful research programs.