# TRYING TO LOOK BAD AT WORK: METHODS AND MOTIVES FOR MANAGING POOR IMPRESSIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

THOMAS E. BECKER
Washington State University
SCOTT L. MARTIN
London House

Intentionally looking bad at work is a type of impression management in which employees purposefully attempt to convey unfavorable impressions. Drawing on the employment experiences of 162 individuals, we documented five forms of such behavior: decreasing performance, not working to potential, withdrawal, displaying a bad attitude, and broadcasting limitations. Motives for managing poor impressions were also documented. The management of poor impressions was discriminable from the management of favorable impressions and self-handicapping. We provide a preliminary framework for understanding the management of poor impressions.

Impression management has been defined as "any behavior that alters or maintains a person's image in the eyes of another and that has as its purpose the attainment of some valued goal" (Villanova & Bernardin, 1989: 299). Such behavior is believed to further the purpose of controlling the impressions others form of the individual engaging in the behavior (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991). As Leary and Kowalski (1990) noted, research in this area has been directed toward both impression construction, the strategies people use to manage impressions, and impression motivation, their motives for controlling others' perceptions. Organizational researchers have studied the role of impression management in attitude measurement (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Booth-Kewley, Edwards, & Rosenfeld, 1992; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), employee selection (Baron, 1986; Becker & Colquitt, 1992; Fletcher, 1990; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, & Kamp, 1990; Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992), feedback-seeking (Morrison & Bies, 1991), supervisor-subordinate relations (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Deluga, 1991; Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wood & Mitchell, 1981; Yukl & Falbe, 1990), performance evaluation (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Shepperd & Arkin, 1991; Smither, Collins, & Buda, 1989; Villanova & Bernardin, 1991; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991), and organizational decision making (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Mazen, 1990).

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All the cited research emphasizes forms of impression management whereby individuals attempt to look good to someone else. However, it is also probable that people sometimes intentionally attempt to look bad—inept, unstable, or undesirable in some other sense. Work with mental patients has suggested that these individuals may try to appear unstable to limit the demands made on them (Braginsky, Braginsky, & Ring, 1969). In personality research, "faking bad" has received some attention (Furnham, 1990; Furnham & Craig, 1987; Furnham & Henderson, 1982), and Hartung (1988) asserted that "deceiving down" can be an adaptive behavior that is to an individual's advantage. Social psychologists have explored the phenomenon of "playing dumb" as a means of managing the impressions of various others (e.g., Gove, Hughes, & Geerken, 1980), and Kowalski and Leary (1990) demonstrated that people will "depreciate" themselves, or present themselves less positively in order to avoid onerous tasks. Finally, in their review, Leary and Kowalski noted the following: "People sometimes present themselves in ways that are inconsistent with the target's values. They may do so for example, when they want to alienate or avoid another person or maintain their sense of autonomy" (1990: 41).

Within the field of organizational behavior, the general perception seems to be that employees' intentionally looking bad in a work setting is very uncommon. For instance, the notion that impression management behaviors are a subset of socially desirable responses (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987) implies that the management of impressions is a means of looking good (socially desirable) rather than of looking bad. Another example of the research consensus is Hough and colleagues' discussion of the management of poor impressions in a selection context; they concluded that "The likelihood of such distortion occurring in most applicant settings is remote. Circumstances in which a person is motivated to portray him- or herself negatively are probably specific to a draft (mandatory military service) or clinical setting (such as evaluation related to Worker's Compensation claims)" (Hough et al., 1990: 593). Nevertheless, the authors acknowledged that their research did not address the extent to which the management of poor impressions occurs in ordinary work settings.

Indeed, there has been little research on the management of poor impressions in organizations. At this point researchers do not know whether or not such behavior occurs in real-life work settings or, if it does occur, its frequency. In addition, virtually no theory or evidence addresses the forms this kind of behavior might take or the motivations underlying intentionally looking bad in the workplace. These gaps in knowledge are important for two reasons. First, intentionally looking bad could have direct implications for individual and organizational effectiveness. As Leary and Kowalski pointed out, "Nothing in the impression management perspective implies that the impressions people convey are necessarily false (although, of course, they sometimes are)" (1990: 40). Thus, intentionally looking bad could indicate real job-related problems; for instance, one obvious way to attempt to look bad is to lower performance. Second, because managing poor

impressions involves employees influencing the perceptions of others, observers, such as managers, could easily make incorrect attributions regarding employee behavior. Their doing so could exacerbate the consequences of the employees intentionally looking bad. For example, without an understanding of the methods and motives for managing poor impressions, managers might misdiagnose employee performance problems.

The purpose of this study was to investigate people's methods and motives for intentionally looking bad in organizations. We also intended to build theory in the area by distinguishing the focal behavior from related constructs and developing a preliminary model of the management of poor impressions.

## THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

### Definition of Intentionally Looking Bad at Work

We conceived of intentionally looking bad at work as a form of impression management whereby an employee purposefully attempts to convey an unfavorable impression. For a behavior to be identified as an aspect of this form of impression management, we required that (1) the person engaging in the behavior believe that a specific person or group will see the behavior as bad and (2) the ultimate target of the behavior is that person or group. Our definition of intentionally looking bad excludes behaviors that involve looking bad to one person or group in order to look good to another person or group. It also excludes behaviors that involve looking bad in one sense in order to look good in another sense.

### Does the Management of Poor Impressions Occur in Organizations?

There is some previous evidence that the management of poor impressions occurs in organizations. Kowalski and Leary (1990) employed a job simulation in which subjects were led to believe that either the better or worse adjusted of two workers would perform an onerous task. As predicted, subjects "self-depreciated" to a greater extent when the well-adjusted worker was to perform the task. This form of self-depreciation falls within the domain of managing poor impressions because Kowalski and Leary's subjects used self-depreciation in order to avoid a very unpleasant task, not to mask an attempt at looking good.

The literature on playing dumb (Dean, Braito, Powers, & Grant, 1975; Gove et al., 1980; Komarovsky, 1946; Wallin, 1950) supplies additional evidence that some employees intentionally look bad at work. Playing dumb involves an individual pretending to be less intelligent or knowledgeable than he or she really is. This behavior falls within the domain of managing poor impressions because playing dumb is not a subtle attempt to look good in some ego-involving sense, nor does it involve looking bad to one target in order to look good to another target. Instead, playing dumb appears to be an effort to adapt to frustrating or demeaning social constraints resulting from,

for example, involvement in an authoritarian relationship or an extremely competitive environment (Gove et al., 1980).

Gove and colleagues (1980) conducted phone interviews with 2,247 respondents from 48 states, asking them whether they had ever pretended to be less intelligent or knowledgeable than they were and, if they had done so, how frequently they had engaged in this behavior. Respondents were also asked about the targets of the behavior. Overall, 25 percent of the respondents reported playing dumb on occasion. Further, 17.0 percent of working men reported playing dumb with their co-workers and 14.9 percent reported playing dumb with their bosses. Working women were less likely than men to report this behavior at work: 9.4 percent reported playing dumb with their co-workers and 7.2 percent reported playing dumb with their bosses.

Kowalski and Leary's (1990) research involved a laboratory simulation using undergraduate psychology students as subjects. Therefore, whether their findings generalize to employees in organizations is an open question. Gove and colleagues' (1980) work was limited in that they examined only one method of managing poor impressions, playing dumb. Nevertheless, these two studies suggest that some employees, at some times, intentionally look bad at work. Thus,

> Hypothesis 1: The management of poor impressions occurs in organizations.

## Managing Poor Impressions Versus Managing Favorable Impressions

It could be argued that many attempts to look bad are simply veiled attempts to look good. For example, there is evidence that people use humility and modesty to ingratiate themselves to others (e.g., Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Langston & Cantor, 1989; Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Stires & Jones, 1969). By our definition, such cases do not represent the management of poor impressions because, as Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1986) pointed out, the purpose of these forms of self-depreciation is to mask the desire to look good. Hence, modesty and humility are subtle tactics for managing favorable, not unfavorable, impressions.

According to Leary and Kowalski (1990), impression management is a function of five factors: self-concept (the way a person views himself or herself), desired identity image (how the person would like to view him- or herself), role constraints (expectations associated with social roles), targets' values (the preferences of significant others), and current or potential social image (how the person is currently regarded or would like to be regarded by others). To the extent these antecedents are stable over time, people should develop a fairly characteristic set of presentational strategies, or strategies for managing impressions. To avoid inconsistencies in self-concept or social identity, a given individual's set of presentational strategies should be more or less homogenous. Because the strategies for looking bad probably differ markedly from those for looking good, people who frequently manage both favorable impressions and poor impressions would be in danger of being

seen by themselves and others as inconsistent. Hence, the tendency to manage poor impressions should be negatively related to the tendency to manage favorable impressions.

However, antecedents to impression management are not immutable: people's role constraints and the targets of their self-presentation strategies may change from time to time, and they may occasionally redefine their self-concepts or social identities. Further, there is evidence that people alter their impression management tactics to meet different goals (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Furnham & Henderson, 1982; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Hartung, 1988). Therefore, although managing poor impressions and favorable impressions should be inversely related, the magnitude of this relationship is unlikely to be strong. Thus,

> *Hypothesis 2: The tendency to manage poor impressions is moderately and inversely related to the tendency to manage favorable impressions.*

## Managing Poor Impressions Versus Self-Handicapping

Self-handicapping has been of considerable interest to social psychologists in the last several years (Luginbuhl & Palmer, 1991; Schill, Beyler, & Wehr, 1991; Shepperd & Arkin, 1989; Tice & Baumeister, 1990; Weary & Williams, 1990; see Higgins, Snyder, & Berglas [1990] for a review). Self-handicapping involves any behavior or choice of performance setting that enhances an individual's opportunity to excuse failure and accept credit for success (Berglas & Jones, 1978). An example is a golfer's claiming to have a bad back. If the golfer slices the ball into the woods, he or she can blame the poor shot on the injury. If the golfer makes a hole-in-one, however, his or her image is enhanced by having made a great shot despite the injury.

Because self-handicapping is a form of impression management that may involve the handicapper's looking bad (Kolditz & Arkin, 1982; Luginbuhl & Palmer, 1991), this construct may appear to be very similar to managing poor impressions. However, it is important to note that self-handicappers attempt to look bad in one sense only in order to look good in a wider, more ego-involving sense (Higgins et al., 1990). Hence, as with modesty and humility, self-handicapping is ultimately a tactic for managing favorable impressions. The management of poor impressions, on the other hand, does not involve looking bad in one way in order to look good in another way. Also, self-handicapping is an attempt to avoid responsibility for failure, but intentionally looking bad may involve seeking responsibility for failure.

Because the management of poor impressions and self-handicapping are both types of impression management involving an individual's performing suboptimally, they are probably positively related. However, because of the differences in the constructs outlined above, the magnitude of this relationship should be only moderate. Therefore,

> *Hypothesis 3: The tendency to manage poor impressions is moderately and positively related to the tendency to engage in self-handicapping.*

## Methods and Motives for Managing Poor Impressions in Organizations

Because this was the first study of the specific methods and motives for managing poor impressions in organizations, our investigation of methods and motives was largely exploratory. Still, some insights into the nature of methods and motives for managing poor impressions can be gleaned from prior theory and research.

Regarding methods of intentionally looking bad, evidence indicates that people may intentionally use certain forms of self-depreciation, such as playing dumb (e.g., Gove et al., 1980) and attempting to appear incompetent (Kowalski & Leary, 1990), to look bad at work. Also, Twaddle (1979) suggested that broadcasting actual or feigned physical limitations associated with illness or injury can be used as a form of self-presentation. To the extent that the ultimate intent of broadcasting limitations is to look bad, it would constitute a form of managing poor impressions rather than self-handicapping. In addition, acting in ways contrary to social norms is a documented strategy for looking bad (Braginsky et al., 1969; Leary & Miller, 1986). Hence,

> *Hypothesis 4: Methods of managing poor impressions in organizations include forms of self-depreciation, such as playing dumb and appearing incompetent; broadcasting limitations; and behaving in ways contrary to social norms, such as acting irrationally or aggressively.*

With respect to motives for intentionally looking bad, avoidance of averse outcomes seems to be a prevalent goal. For instance, people may try to appear incompetent to avoid stressful events or unpleasant tasks (Braginsky et al., 1980; Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Leary & Miller, 1986). An example in the workplace would be an employee's decreasing his or her performance to reduce the stress associated with a heavy workload. Obtaining valued outcomes is another likely motive. For example, psychiatric researchers have suggested that the offensive behavior of some mental patients may be largely a product of positive reinforcement (Carson, 1969; Schlenker, 1980), and Leary and Miller (1990) asserted that the desire to achieve certain outcomes sometimes leads people to project images of themselves that include undesirable characteristics. An example in organizations would be an employee's displaying a bad attitude in an attempt to get a raise. Thus,

> *Hypothesis 5: Motives for managing poor impressions in organizations include avoiding unpleasant tasks or events and attempting to obtain valued outcomes.*

To investigate the phenomenon of intentionally looking bad at work, we conducted two studies. The first, a pilot study, involved a small group of

undergraduates and was carried out in order to develop categories for classifying methods and motives for the management of poor impressions. The second, primary study involved a larger number of people and was completed to cross-validate the categories identified in the pilot, improve their reliability, and test the hypotheses.

## PILOT STUDY

### Methods

**Respondents.** Thirty-six upper division students in an introductory course on human resource management taught at the main campus of a large northwestern university were invited to participate in the pilot study. Students were offered the options of either participating in the study or completing a short paper, with both assignments worth equal course credit. Of the 36 students, 28 elected to participate in the study; 43 percent of these were women. The average age of the respondents was 21.4 years.

**Procedures.** To generate cases of intentionally looking bad in organizations, we asked the respondents to provide a written answer to an open-ended question regarding the management of poor impressions. The instructions provided an example of a situation in which an employee appeared to display a bad attitude in an attempt to receive a pay raise. Respondents were then asked

> Can you think of any real-life examples when someone (yourself or someone else) intentionally made him- or herself look bad at work (that is, stupid, greedy, or in some way ineffective)? In the space below, describe, if you can, a very specific situation where someone tried to look bad *on purpose*. Be sure to (1) explain the situation clearly, and (2) describe *why* the person tried to look bad.

Oral instructions to the students emphasized that course credit would be given even to those respondents who had never seen such behavior or who could not recall instances of seeing someone intentionally look bad at work. This was done to minimize the likelihood that respondents would make up examples simply to get credit. Completed responses were turned in one week from the day the instructions were handed out.

### Results

Content analysis (Babbie, 1989; Holsti, 1969) was used to classify cases. In creating categories of methods, the first author carefully read the students' cases and then sorted them into classes that, in his judgment, contained similar methods. In labeling these classes, the first author considered the methods reflected in Hypothesis 4 and the specific nature of the cases within each class. Through this process, five categories of methods for intentionally looking bad at work were developed. The following are the categories and their definitions. (1) *Decrease performance:* Employees restrict productivity,

make more mistakes than formerly, do poorer-quality work, or neglect tasks. (2) *Not work to potential*: Employees feign ignorance of job knowledge or restrict the quantity or quality of their work. This category differs from "decrease performance" because the latter implies an employee previously worked at a higher level. (3) *Withdraw*: Employees engage in tardiness, faked illness, or unauthorized or long breaks. (4) *Display a bad attitude*: Employees complain, act angry, upset, strange, or weird, are hard to get along with or insubordinate. (5) *Broadcast limitations*: Employees let others know (verbally or nonverbally) of physical problems, errors, mistakes, or other personal limitations curtailing effective performance.

To create categories of motives, the first author read the cases once again and sorted them into classes containing similar motives. In labeling these classes, the motives reflected in Hypothesis 5 and the specific nature of the cases within each class were considered. Four classes of motives for intentionally looking bad at work were developed: (1) *Avoidance*: Employee seeks to avoid additional work, stress, burnout, or an unwanted transfer or promotion. (2) *Obtain concrete rewards*: Employee seeks to obtain a pay raise or a desired transfer, promotion, or demotion. (3) *Exit*: Employee seeks to get laid off, fired, or suspended, and perhaps also to collect unemployment or workers' compensation. (4) *Power*: Employee seeks to control, manipulate, or intimidate others, get revenge, or make someone else look bad.

Using these definitions and guidelines, two graduate students working on dissertations in the field of organizational behavior classified each case into the categories of methods and motives. The guidelines indicated that some cases might reflect multiple methods, multiple motives, or both. To assess interrater agreement, we used the Tinsley and Weiss (1975) index recommended by Schmitt and Klimoski (1991). The formula for this index is as follows: $T = (N_1 - NP)/(N - NP)$, where $N_1$ is the number of agreements between raters, $N$ is the number of cases rated, and $P$ is the probability that raters would agree by chance. Table 1 shows results for interrater agreement and the proportion of the cases classified into each category of method and motive.

## PRIMARY STUDY: METHODS

### Respondents

One hundred sixty-four business students in four classes conducted at two branch campuses of the same university used in the pilot study were invited to participate in the primary study. Students from branch campuses were used because, in this university, these individuals tended to be older and have more job experience than students at the main campus. Hence, we believed the branch campus students would better represent employees than the undergraduates from the main campus.

Of the 164 students, 162 voluntarily participated in the study and received extra credit for their involvement. Measures were made at two separate times; 145 students participated at both measurement times, and 17

## TABLE 1
### Interrater Agreement and Classifications into Categories[a]

| Categories | Pilot Study | | Primary Study | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Agreement | Percentage | Agreement | Percentage |
| Methods | | | | |
| Decrease individual performance | .94 | 43.8 | .90 | 48.8 |
| Not work to potential | .78 | 20.8 | .97 | 32.2 |
| Withdraw | 1.00 | 25.0 | .94 | 10.0 |
| Display bad attitude | .72 | 39.6 | .91 | 10.0 |
| Broadcast limitations | .78 | 15.4 | .91 | 4.4 |
| Overall agreement | .88 | | .93 | |
| Motives | | | | |
| Avoidance | .83 | 31.3 | .84 | 60.4 |
| Concrete rewards | .89 | 41.7 | .88 | 13.2 |
| Exit | .94 | 27.1 | .99 | 11.0 |
| Power | .72 | 27.1 | .93 | 9.9 |
| Overall agreement | .88 | | .91 | |

[a] For the pilot study, $N = 28$; for the primary study, $N = 162$. We used the Tinsley and Weiss (1975) index as the indicator of rater agreement. The proportion of cases classified into the categories does not sum to 100 percent because some cases fit multiple categories and a few did not fit any.

participated at time 1 only. Over three-quarters (78.4%) of the respondents were currently employed, and all had been employed at some point during the past five years. Roughly half (50.3%) of the respondents had held management positions. Women made up 56.2 percent of the respondents, and 90.7 percent of the respondents were white. The average respondent was 30.25 years old, had been a full-time employee for 33.4 months (2.78 years) over the last five years, and had been at his or her current job for the past 41.9 months (3.49 years). These individuals represented a variety of occupations and included electrical engineers, accounting clerks, paralegals, technicians, dock workers, office supervisors, secretaries, insurance agents, food servers, accountants, sales managers, general office workers, opticians, and finance officers.

### Procedures

**Instructions to respondents.** Surveys were sent to the instructors of the four courses, who then distributed the materials to their students. As in the pilot study, we asked the students to respond to an open-ended question regarding their observations of the management of poor impressions. However, drawing on the results of the pilot study, we refined the instructions by providing what we believed to be a more typical example of managing poor impressions than was provided previously:

> Mary has been working very hard on her job. In fact, it seems that the harder she works the more work she is asked to do. After several years of this, Mary feels very stressed and "burned out." So, in order to reduce her workload and the accompanying

> stress, Mary attempts to lower her boss's opinion of her by de-
> creasing her performance. This way, Mary believes, she won't be
> asked to do so much work.

The rest of the instructions were identical to those given in the pilot, except that we told respondents, "If you cannot think of any such situation, please skip to Section 2." The remainder of the survey asked questions about the case reported in the first section, the frequency with which the respondent had seen himself or herself and others try to make themselves look bad, and demographic characteristics. Respondents were given one week to complete the survey outside of class. Students turned in their questionnaires to their instructors, who then sent them to us via campus mail.

**Instructions to raters.** Two graduate students, different from those in the pilot study, working on their dissertations in the field of organizational behavior served as raters in the primary study. In an attempt to improve interrater agreement, we slightly altered the definitions of two of the methods, providing raters with these definitions:

> *Withdraw*—Engage in absence, tardiness, faked illness, or unau-
> thorized or long breaks (including socializing with co-workers or
> others).

> *Broadcast limitations*—Intentionally let others know (verbally
> or nonverbally) of physical problems, errors, mistakes, or other
> personal limitations to effective performance. Note that this does
> *not* typically include a change in actual performance.

We also provided the following slightly revised definitions of two of the motives:

> *Avoidance*—Avoid additional or unwanted work, responsibili-
> ties, stress, burnout, or an unwanted transfer or promotion. This
> may also include avoiding working with a given person or
> group.

> *Obtain concrete awards*—Obtain a pay raise, desired transfer,
> promotion, demotion, or some other tangible positive outcome.

Finally, we provided raters with these additional guidelines:

1. If there is not a clear indication of an intentional drop in performance, the case should be coded as "do not work to potential."
2. Feigning ignorance (e.g., playing dumb) is a form of not working to potential (unless there is a clear drop in performance, in which case it is decreasing individual performance).
3. If someone could have performed an activity, task, or responsibility but would not, this is a form of not working to potential (unless there is a clear drop in performance).
4. Broadcasting limitations implies (a) actual rather than feigned limitations, and (b) assertively making these limitations known. Note that this behavior is proactive rather than merely reactive.

**Time periods.** Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) suggested that researchers conducting surveys can decrease response bias, such as consistency effects,

by temporally separating the measurement of key variables. To reduce concerns about response bias in our study, we assessed the respondents' tendency to engage in impression management and self-handicapping in a second survey administered one month following the completion and return of the first survey. The same procedures of administration and survey return were used at time 2 as had been used at time 1.

**Classification of methods and motives.** To quantify the classification of cases, we created dummy-coded variables for each category. For a given method or motive, a value of 0 represented cases that were not classified into the category and a value of 1 represented cases that were so classified. For a case to be classified into a category of method or motive, both raters had to agree that the case belonged in that category.

## Time 1 Measures

**Frequency of managing poor impressions.** The frequency with which respondents managed poor impressions at work was assessed by two items (1) "About how often have you yourself tried to make yourself look worse than you are at work?" (five-point scale, never to very often). And (2) "About how many times in the last five years have you yourself tried to make yourself look worse than you are at work?" (six-point scale, from 0 to more than 20). We computed scale scores by summing responses on the two items ($\alpha$ = .93).

The frequency with which respondents had seen other people manage poor impressions was measured by the same items and response format, with "other people" and appropriate referents replacing "you" and its referents. We again computed scale scores by summing responses on the two items ($\alpha$ = .85).

**Actor and target.** To determine the actor in the cases the respondents provided, we asked: "In the situation you just described, who was trying to make himself or herself look bad?" Response categories were (1) "you," (2) "another person you worked with," and (3) "other." A "not applicable" option was provided for respondents who had never seen or could not remember seeing anyone intentionally look bad at work. To determine the target of the management of poor impressions, we asked: "In the situation you described, who was the person trying to look bad to?" Response categories were: (1) "his/her immediate boss," (2) "management in general," (3) "co-workers," (4) "subordinates," and (5) "other." A "not applicable" option was also provided for this question.

**Demographic variables.** The last section asked respondents to supply information about their employment status, length of employment, job title, gender, year of birth, and ethnic group.

## Time 2 Measures

**Impression management.** To assess individuals' tendency to manage favorable impressions, we used the 20-item scale developed by Paulhus in his Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1984, 1988). Ex-

amples of items are (1) "I sometimes tell lies if I have to" (reverse-coded), (2) "When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening," and (3) "I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick" (reverse-coded). Responses are given on a scale from 1, "not true," to 7, "very true."

We preferred Paulhus's measure to others because we were interested in the relationship between managing poor impressions and a person's general tendency to manage favorable impressions; other measures of managing favorable impressions, such as the scales developed by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) and by Yukl and Falbe (1990), assess very specific influence tactics. In addition, the factor structure of the Kipnis and colleagues scales has not held up well in later samples (Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990), and the alpha coefficients for both the Kipnis and colleagues and Yukl and Falbe scales cluster in the .65 to .75 range. In contrast, the Paulhus scale appears to have a stable factor structure, alphas have ranged from .75 to .86, and there is evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for the measure (Paulhus, 1991).

To assess the dimensionality of impression management for our data, we used principal axis factoring with squared multiple correlations as communality estimates to fit the common factor model to the data. On the basis of the differences between eigenvalues and an examination of the scree plot, one factor was selected. We computed scale scores for impression management by summing responses on all 20 items ($\alpha = .84$). Complete information on scale development is available upon request.

**Self-handicapping.** To assess the tendency to engage in self-handicapping, we used a revised version of Jones and Rhodewalt's (1982) 25-item Self-Handicapping Scale. Examples of items are (1) "I suppose I feel 'under the weather' more often than most people," (2) "I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way," and (3) "I often think I have more than my share of bad luck in sports, card games, and other measures of talent." Responses were given on a scale ranging from 0, "disagree very much," to 5, "agree very much." Rhodewalt (1990) reported acceptable internal consistency for this scale, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha for a sample of 503 individuals of .79; he also reported acceptable stability, obtaining a test-retest reliability for a sample of 90 individuals over a one-month period of .74. However, Rhodewalt also noted some evidence that the measure is multidimensional and that several items may be poor indicators of the underlying constructs. Other evidence for the validity of this measure is provided in Strube (1985) and Rhodewalt.

We followed the same statistical procedure as for impression management to assess the dimensionality of self-handicapping. Because of problems of interpretability and internal consistency, we dropped one factor whose composite scale had an alpha of .58. Seven items loaded on the other factor, which was interpretable as a tendency to engage in self-handicapping. Therefore, we computed scale scores for self-handicapping by summing

across these seven items. Coefficient alpha for our data was .74. Complete information on scale development is available upon request.

## PRIMARY STUDY: RESULTS

Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for all the measures. Results of the qualitative analyses and tests of hypotheses are detailed below.

### Cases

Of our 162 participants, 91 (56.2%) reported incidents in which they or someone else managed poor impressions. The Appendix provides excerpts of cases illustrating each category of method and motive. Reading the cases indicates that both impression construction and impression motivation are multifaceted. In many instances, a given case includes several strategies for managing poor impressions and a variety of reasons for doing so. Together, these cases constitute evidence that the management of poor impressions occurs in the workplace and is a discriminable, legitimate phenomenon.

Table 1 gives the percentages of cases classified into each category of method and motive and interrater agreement for each category for both the pilot and the primary study. Values of the Tinsley and Weiss (1975) index of agreement for several of the categories are considerably larger in the primary study than in the pilot. For example, agreement for the category "not work to potential" is .97 for the primary study and .78 for the pilot. As Table 1 shows, overall agreement for the classification of both methods and motives appears to be somewhat improved. We attribute the increase in agreement largely to refinement in the definitions of the categories and the expanded guidelines for classification.

### Tests of Hypotheses

To test Hypothesis 1, we first examined whether the mean frequency with which respondents had themselves managed poor impressions was greater than 1.0, a value indicating that a respondent had never tried to make himself or herself look bad at work. We found that the mean frequency ($\bar{x} = 1.49$) was indeed greater than 1.0 ($t = 9.09$, $p < .01$). Next, we examined results for observations of others; this mean frequency was also greater than 1.0 ($\bar{x} = 2.58$, $t = 17.68$, $p < .01$). These findings support Hypothesis 1.

As Table 2 shows, scores on the impression management scale were moderately, inversely related to the frequency with which respondents engaged in managing poor impressions ($r = -.31$, $p < .05$). This finding supports Hypothesis 2. In addition, as Table 2 shows, the frequency with which respondents themselves intentionally looked bad at work was moderately and positively related to self-handicapping ($r = .30$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 3.

The simple correlations reported in the last paragraph represent the relationships among the relevant variables (managing poor impression, man-

## TABLE 2
## Descriptive Statistics and Correlations[a]

| Variables | N | Means | s.d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demographic variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Tenure | 158 | 33.40 | 22.01 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Management experience | 161 | 0.50 | 0.50 | -.26* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Gender | 162 | 0.44 | 0.50 | .06 | -.06 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Age | 162 | 30.25 | 7.69 | .25* | -.29* | -.10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequencies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Looking bad, self | 159 | 1.49 | 0.68 | -.06 | .12 | .20* | -.19* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Looking bad, others | 157 | 2.58 | 1.12 | .14 | -.01 | .06 | .03 | .39* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Correlates | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Impression management | 145 | 3.95 | 0.94 | -.04 | -.06 | -.23* | .31* | -.31* | -.14 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Self-handicapping | 145 | 2.24 | 0.74 | -.15 | .24* | .12 | -.25* | .30* | .14 | -.35* | | | | | | | | | |
| Methods | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Decreasing performance | 91 | | | .04 | .03 | .07 | -.24* | .08 | .19 | -.12 | .02 | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Withdrawal | 91 | | | -.06 | .03 | .03 | .09 | -.09 | -.09 | -.01 | .06 | -.18 | | | | | | | |
| 11. Not working to potential | 91 | | | -.03 | .00 | -.09 | .08 | .09 | -.11 | .10 | -.01 | -.67* | -.23* | | | | | | |
| 12. Displaying a bad attitude | 91 | | | .02 | .03 | -.04 | .01 | .13 | .07 | .06 | .01 | -.10 | .14 | -.15 | | | | | |
| 13. Broadcasting limitations | 91 | | | -.09 | -.01 | -.11 | -.08 | -.11 | -.11 | .14 | .01 | -.21* | -.07 | -.15 | -.07 | | | | |
| Motives | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Avoidance | 91 | | | .19 | -.08 | .14 | .02 | .13 | .11 | -.09 | .10 | -.18 | -.04 | .21* | -.19 | -.05 | | | |
| 15. Concrete rewards | 91 | | | -.16 | .18 | .19 | -.09 | .07 | .10 | .14 | .07 | .01 | -.13 | .01 | .09 | .07 | -.35* | | |
| 16. Exit | 91 | | | -.11 | -.09 | -.14 | -.11 | -.07 | -.15 | .09 | -.11 | .12 | .14 | -.15 | .26* | -.07 | -.43* | -.14 | |
| 17. Power | 91 | | | -.07 | .09 | -.04 | -.17 | -.04 | .18 | -.08 | .03 | .19 | .01 | -.15 | -.11 | -.07 | -.33* | .09 | -.12 |

[a] Data sets ranged from 70 to 159 observations with an average of 102. Management experience was dummy-coded, with 0 = no management experience and 1 = management experience. Gender was also dummy-coded, with woman = 0 and man = 1.

* $p < .05$

aging favorable impressions, and self-handicapping) when demographic variables are uncontrolled. If these relationships can be explained simply by demographic variables, support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 would be less convincing. To provide a more conservative test of the hypotheses, we conducted two additional sets of analyses. The dependent variable in both was the frequency with which respondents themselves engaged in intentionally looking bad. The first analysis was a hierarchical regression equation with the set of demographic variables entered at the first step and the variables of interest, impression management and self-handicapping, entered at step 2. The purpose of this analysis was to examine the magnitude of the increment in $R^2$ associated with impression management and self-handicapping as a set. The second analysis was a simultaneous regression equation into which all variables were entered at the same time. The purpose here was to determine whether or not both impression management and self-handicapping accounted for unique variance.

Table 3 shows results. As can be seen, impression management scores and self-handicapping together account for about 8 percent of the variance in the frequency with which respondents intentionally looked bad at work, over and above variance explained by the demographic variables. Further, as the table shows, impression management scores and self-handicapping were the only variables in the simultaneous regression to explain a significant amount of unique variance.

## TABLE 3
### Results of Regression Analyses of Demographic Variables, Impression Management, and Self-Handicapping

| Variables | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | $F$ | $\beta$ | $t$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hierarchical regression | | | | | |
| Demographic variables | .142 | | 1.95* | | |
| Impression management and self-handicapping | .219 | .077 | 5.97* | | |
| Simultaneous regression | | | | | |
| Employment status 1 | | | | −.10 | −0.75 |
| Employment status 2 | | | | .12 | 0.99 |
| Employment status 3 | | | | .20 | 1.46 |
| Ethnic group 1 | | | | −.34 | −0.80 |
| Ethnic group 2 | | | | −.22 | −0.71 |
| Ethnic group 3 | | | | .68 | 1.19 |
| Ethnic group 4 | | | | −.26 | −1.32 |
| Ethnic group 5 | | | | .40 | 1.05 |
| Management experience | | | | .11 | 0.93 |
| Gender | | | | .13 | 1.12 |
| Tenure | | | | .01 | 0.91 |
| Age | | | | −.01 | −0.80 |
| Impression management | | | | −.15 | −2.17* |
| Self-handicapping | | | | .17 | 2.03* |

* $p < .05$

The categories of methods based on Hypothesis 4 and developed in the pilot study proved to be useful for classifying cases in the primary study. Methods for looking bad at work included decreasing performance (looking less competent by restricting productivity, making mistakes, or neglecting tasks) and not working to potential (including feigning ignorance). Both methods involve forms of self-depreciation. Other methods included displaying a bad attitude and withdrawal. Both of these methods, we suggest, involve behaving in ways contrary to social norms. Finally, some employees broadcast limitations by assertively informing others of physical problems and work-related errors. As Table 1 shows, the raters classified cases into each method category very reliably. These findings tend to support Hypothesis 4.

Categories of motives based on Hypothesis 5 and developed in the pilot also proved to be useful for classifying cases in the primary study. Avoidance of additional work or stress was a common motive for managing poor impressions, as was attempting to obtain such valued outcomes as concrete rewards, organizational exit, and power over others. As Table 1 shows, the raters also classified cases into each category of motive very reliably. These results tend to support Hypothesis 5.

## Ancillary Analyses

**Test for instructor effect.** To examine whether an instructor effect accounted for variance in the management of poor impressions, we created three effects-coded variables to represent the four course instructors who had administered the survey. The frequency of reports of individuals' intentionally looking bad was then regressed on these variables. The effects-coded variables did not explain variance in the frequency with which respondents intentionally made themselves look bad ($R^2 = .01$, $F = 0.69$, n.s.), nor did these variables account for significant variance in the frequency with which respondents observed others managing poor impressions ($R^2 = .02$, $F = 1.22$, n.s.).

**Actors and targets.** With respect to the actor in the cases, 22 percent of the respondents who provided cases described a scenario in which they themselves had intentionally looked bad, and 74.6 percent described scenarios in which someone else managed poor impressions. The remaining 3.4 percent of the respondents described complex cases involving themselves and others purposefully managing poor impressions. Regarding the target of the impression management, 57.1 percent of the respondents who supplied cases described scenarios in which their immediate bosses were the foci of the behaviors. In 35.2 percent of the cases, management in general was the target, and in 14.3 percent of the cases co-workers were the targets. In 2.2 percent of the cases, a supervisor was described as trying to look bad to a subordinate. These numbers total more than 100 percent because some of the cases involved multiple targets.

**Impression management and actors.** To examine the relationship between the actor in the cases and the management of favorable impressions,

we created a dummy-coded variable in which a value of 0 represented cases in which the respondents reported themselves as the actor and a value of 1 represented cases in which respondents reported someone else as the actor. The correlation of this variable with the management of favorable impressions was significant ($r = .32$, $p < .01$). Thus, respondents who reported cases of themselves managing poor impressions tended to score lower on the measure of impression management than respondents who reported instances of someone besides themselves managing poor impressions.

## DISCUSSION

The central finding of our study is verification that people do sometimes intentionally look bad at work. In the current investigation, the most common target of the management of poor impressions was an immediate supervisor. However, employees sometimes attempted to look bad to their peers and, on occasion, supervisors intentionally looked bad to their subordinates. Another important finding is that intentionally looking bad is empirically discriminable from related concepts: roughly 90 percent of the variance in the management of poor impressions was not shared with the management of favorable impressions or self-handicapping. This finding supports our definition of intentionally looking bad and our contention that managing poor impressions differs from concepts such as humility, modesty, and self-handicapping.

Our research contributes to the broad literature on impression management in at least two ways. First, our finding that impression management can involve intentionally looking bad calls into question Zerbe and Paulhus's (1987) suggestion that impression management is a subset of socially desirable responding. We suggest that it is more reasonable to consider impression management as a separate phenomenon, one that only sometimes involves socially desirable responding. Second, by investigating methods and motives for intentionally looking bad, the study adds to our understanding of impression construction and impression motivation. The methods people use to intentionally look bad found in this study are quite different from the influence tactics they use to look good (cf. Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). In addition, motives for managing poor impressions seem to differ from those for managing favorable impressions. For instance, in discussing the reasons people attempt to look good, Leary and Kowalski (1990) described certain social and material outcomes, self-esteem maintenance, and the development of personal identity, motives quite different from those found in our study.

This investigation also moves beyond earlier research on playing dumb and self-depreciation (Dean et al., 1975; Gove et al., 1980; Kowalski & Leary, 1990) by unearthing a wide variety of methods of intentionally looking bad, identifying specific motives for managing poor impressions, and providing evidence that the phenomenon occurs in real work settings. A related contribution is the finding that certain combinations of methods and motives are

more likely to occur than others. Not working to potential in order to look bad tends to be motivated by the desire to avoid additional work. Displaying a "bad attitude" in order to look bad tends to be motivated by a desire to leave an organization.

The taxonomy of methods and motives developed in this study is unlikely to be universal. There may be other methods and motives for managing poor impressions, and some of our categories may not be found in all organizations. Still, cases from the primary study were very reliably placed into the categories developed in the pilot. Further, if the taxonomy was not generalizable, there should have been many instances in which either (1) cases in the primary study could not be placed in the taxonomy and required other categories or (2) categories in the taxonomy were not needed to place cases. In fact, nearly all the cases from the primary study could be placed in the taxonomy and all the categories in the taxonomy were used, suggesting the taxonomy may be to some extent generalizable.

The management of poor impressions does not appear to occur with great frequency but appears to be common enough to warrant further investigation. Over half of our respondents reported witnessing a case of someone intentionally looking bad at work. In addition, although respondents suggested that they themselves seldom engaged in such behavior, they typically reported observing others intentionally looking bad "occasionally." Evidence also suggested that respondents who did not discuss cases of themselves managing poor impressions may have been attempting to manage favorable impressions—with us the researchers presumably as targets. A related finding was that the majority of respondents preferred to provide cases of people other than themselves managing poor impressions. These results suggest that our self-report data may have underestimated the actual frequency of intentionally looking bad. In fact, relatively high levels of managing poor impressions may be symptomatic of dysfunctional organizational cultures. Thus, investigation of within-organization and between-organizations variation in employees' intentionally looking bad is a potentially fruitful topic for future research.

Even in organizations in which the management of poor impressions has a low base rate, intentionally looking bad may have important consequences. Most of the methods and motives for intentionally looking bad identified in this study involve actions that are typically disadvantageous to organizations. In addition, the management of poor impressions appears to promote inaccurate perceptions among organization members. This inaccuracy could itself produce negative outcomes by leading organizational decision makers to misinterpret employee behavior. A review of the cases described in the Appendix indicates that outcomes of managing poor impressions can include inequitable treatment of employees, increased health care costs, decreased customer satisfaction, and decreased individual and organizational effectiveness resulting from lower productivity. Whenever such outcomes occur, the financial and social costs are unlikely to be trivial.

Future work should determine more precisely the nature and severity of the consequences of employees' intentionally looking bad at work.

To guide future research toward a deeper understanding of the management of poor impressions, we offer the tentative framework illustrated in Figure 1. In this model, people's motives for intentionally looking bad are a function of individual differences and situational factors. Possibly relevant individual differences are the need for achievement and self-esteem. We suspect that individuals with a high need for achievement will be less likely to engage in the management of poor impressions because this behavior would not generally be expected to result in long-term career advancement. We also suspect that employees with chronically low self-esteem will be more likely to manage poor impressions because looking bad to others is consistent with their own negative self-perceptions.

Examples of potentially relevant situational factors are task characteristics and leader attributes. Jobs with low autonomy, insufficient feedback, and uninteresting duties probably set the stage for the development of such motives as the avoidance of unpleasant work and organizational exit. Supportive leaders who consider the needs of subordinates may be able to reduce employees' potential to be motivated by concerns such as organizational exit and revenge (power). Leaders who supply reasonable goals and

**FIGURE 1**
**Model of the Management of Poor Impressions**
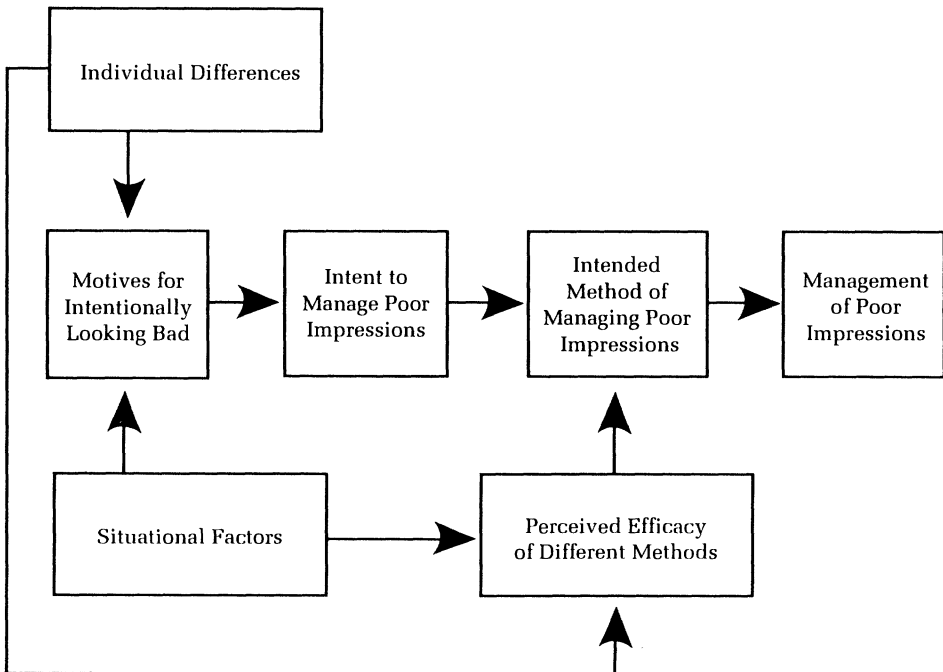
direction to their subordinates may reduce the work-related stress that underlies the avoidance motive. In our model, once motives for intentionally looking bad exist, the intention to engage in the management of poor impressions is antecedent to the intended method.

The perceived efficacy of the different methods is also a function of individual differences and situational factors. For instance, self-efficacy (a person's estimate of his or her ability to accomplish a certain task) would likely guide employees toward methods of looking bad that they expect they can successfully implement. Contextual determinants could include both the opportunity to use certain methods and organizational practices governing the consequences of poor performance and withdrawal behaviors. The perceived efficacy of the methods, along with the intent to manage poor impressions, determines which particular methods an individual uses. When an individual has chosen a method or methods, the management of poor impressions will take place. To illustrate the model more concretely, we offer the following example:

> John is a unionized production worker whose job, while financially rewarding, involves performing repetitive, uninteresting tasks at a furious rate of speed. John has chronically low self-esteem and low need for achievement but is generally a good worker. John's new supervisor, in a desire to impress the employer, wants to increase the productivity of his unit. However, the supervisor is low on both initiating structure and consideration; the supervisor's strategy for increasing productivity is to identify the most capable, motivated employees and give them more work. The plant's contract with the union makes it difficult for management to terminate workers for low performance, but does allow for discharge due to tardiness, absenteeism, and other forms of withdrawal.

Our model suggests John is a candidate for the management of poor impressions. He has a clear reason for intentionally looking bad (to avoid additional work), and his personal attributes (low self-esteem and low need for achievement) and situation (an already hectic work pace, a boring job, and an ineffective supervisor) make it likely that John will be motivated to manage poor impressions. The methods John intends to use to look bad will depend on his estimate of his ability to successfully implement a given method and on situational factors. He cannot very well withdraw from the workplace (he could be fired for doing so), and displaying a bad attitude would not necessarily lead his supervisor to believe John is incapable or unmotivated. Also, because John is currently a good worker, he cannot use "not working to potential" as a tactic. However, he may be able to decrease his performance quickly enough that his new boss won't recognize his potential; at any rate, decreasing performance would demonstrate low motivation. Also, broadcasting limitations could be effective in making John appear less capable. Hence, decreasing performance and broadcasting limitations would likely have the highest perceived efficacy. Given both the intent to

manage poor impressions and several plausible methods for doing so, the model predicts John would attempt to manage poor impressions.

The bulk of our results do not appear to be attributable to study artifacts such as an instructor effect. Still, future research should investigate several issues we did not address. First, later work must explicate the determinants of the correlation between scores on the impression management measures and the frequency with which respondents reported intentionally looking bad. Our interpretation was that employees with a tendency to engage in the management of favorable impressions were less likely than others to engage in the management of poor impressions. This interpretation was consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of Hypothesis 2. However, it is possible that the measure of the frequency with which respondents managed poor impressions was itself affected by impression management. The interpretation here would be that less candid respondents reported lower frequencies of intentionally looking bad because managing poor impressions is not socially desirable. Because we attempted to make completion of the survey nonthreatening by stressing confidentiality and our lack of intent to evaluate respondents, we find this second interpretation less plausible than the first. Nevertheless, later work should examine this issue in greater depth.

Second, the proportion of cases classified into the categories of methods and motives varied between our two studies. In the pilot, our instructions included an example of intentionally looking bad involving someone demonstrating a bad attitude to obtain concrete rewards. In the primary study, we provided an example involving someone decreasing performance to avoid unwanted work. The proportion of respondent cases classified into the categories seemed to vary accordingly. In the pilot study, 39.6 percent of the cases involved someone demonstrating a bad attitude, and in the primary study 10 percent of the cases were thus classified. Also, in the pilot 31.3 percent of the cases involved the avoidance motive, but in the primary study 60.4 percent of the cases involved this motive. Because of the implications of these findings for the internal validity of our study, future work needs to determine whether these differences are the result of variations in the demographic characteristics and work experience of the respondent groups or a priming effect within our instructions. If it is the latter, the reason for the priming effect should be determined. Perhaps the example serves as a cue for the recall of specific events.

Finally, the current study did not focus on how observers cognitively evaluate and interpret the intentionality associated with the management of unfavorable impressions. The labeling of most behavior is a function of imputed intentionality, but this fact has thus far not received great attention in the literature on impression management within organizations. Future theoretical and empirical work on the management of both favorable and unfavorable impressions should follow the lead of Jones (1964), who discussed the role of inferred intention in the ingratiation process.

In conclusion, we hope that we have taken several meaningful first steps toward promoting a greater appreciation of a somewhat neglected phenom-

enon, the management of poor impressions in organizations. It is our belief that a heightened understanding of this behavior could enhance the effectiveness of individuals and organizations.

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# APPENDIX

The following excerpts of cases are drawn from the primary study to illustrate each category of method and motive. We have highlighted the segments of the cases that indicate why the cases belong in the category being illustrated.

### Methods

**Decrease performance.** The employee in question had been working a lot of overtime for the past month. . . . Shift supervisors were given discretionary limits on who was assigned to work holiday shifts. . . . Sign-ups were being taken for the next holiday. The employee/operator was assigned to the computer console work station for that shift rotation. That particular operator was us*ually very good* at the console working station, making few if any mistakes. *During the week prior to selection of who would work the holiday, the operator seemed to have a memory malfunction. Everything they did was wrong* but nothing serious enough to bring any of the computers to a halt. The operator was not picked to work the holiday. *After the holiday passed, the errors stopped.*

**Withdraw.** A friend of mine in retail sales asked her boss to give her less hours a week because she did not want to work that many hours. Her boss refused, stating that there would not be enough coverage if she worked less. In retaliation, *she would frequently skip work* with or without calling in with an excuse . . . in an attempt to make her boss mad at her and cut her hours.

**Not work to potential.** In the Navy, an office is frequently charged with collateral duties above and beyond the regular more-than-full-time job. . . . I observed many examples of *individuals who were careful not to display any special competencies* in any areas that could remotely be related to these collateral duties. That way, if they were "awarded" the tasks, they could exceed expectations and make a show of how difficult their lot was—helping them avoid additional such jobs.

**Display a bad attitude.** The situation involves an employee who would *give the appearance of not caring* and not being a leader in a leadership position. This employee would also *make comments about how much he did not like his work situation and how pointless (or unimportant) his activities were.* He felt by not taking the leadership role he was assigned, he would be chastised and perhaps would lead to him being placed in another situation more to his liking.

**Broadcast limitations.** The only circumstance I have witnessed related to this topic are employees who come to work somewhat physically ill—though not extremely ill, and will *act*

*more sick than they actually are* so they can leave work early. I have done this myself on some occasions when I've been emotionally upset or a bit ill, and really didn't feel up to being at work.

### Motives

**Avoidance.** This employee "plays dumb" when customers come to her asking for answers to questions or for her assistance. She does have the knowledge needed to effectively carry out the responsibility, but instead *chooses to appear ineffective to discourage future requests/work.* This behavior carries over to other responsibilities as well; i.e., output from her is delayed so that customers become frustrated and think twice before asking for future assistance, especially when a quick work turn around is required.

**Concrete rewards.** I try to look stressed out or bored in front of my boss. The reason being, *if he feels I'm over worked, hopefully, I'll get a raise* .... I figure that since I now run the computer to ring up sales, something only two other people can do, I deserve a raise.... By hiring some other salesman he would have to pay at least another $4 per hour more than my wage. *I feel I should get some of his savings* and when he doesn't think so, I figured I'm not going to bust my ass for him so I cut my performance level.

**Exit.** I worked with a girl in merchandise sales who tried to make herself look bad on purpose. She had been looking for another job and when she got hired at another place, she put in her two weeks notice at her current job. She was really anxious to start the new job and didn't want to work those last two weeks.... She wasn't pulling her work load and wasn't worried about getting in trouble. Actually, that's *what she wanted—was to get dismissed* before finishing the last two weeks so she could start her new job.

**Power.** A woman who holds a high level clerical position in the finance department of a large firm constantly complains that she "is just not financial" .... She had a reputation for acting like she possesses inferior intelligence. I think this employee has several motivations for her actions at work. *This particular employee knows how to manipulate her organization.* In her environment, the squeaky wheel always gets the grease.

**Thomas E. Becker** earned his Ph.D. degree in industrial-organizational psychology at Ohio State University. He is an assistant professor of management and systems at Washington State University. His current research interests include work-related commitments, the dynamics of performance appraisal, and socially desirable responding within organizations.

**Scott L. Martin** is the senior director of consulting at London House. He received his Ph.D. degree from Ohio State University in industrial-organizational psychology. His current research and professional interests include human resource assessment, performance management, and employment law.