

Self-Promotion versus Supplication: How Supervisor Age Shapes the Performance Consequences of Salesperson Impression Management Tactics

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Abstract

This study examines how two impression management tactics—self-promotion (positive) and supplication (negative)—affect salesperson performance and emotional exhaustion. Drawing on Self-Presentation Theory and Impression Management Theory, we analyze task-, team-, and organizational-level performance using data from 206 salesperson–supervisor dyads. Results show that supplication increases emotional exhaustion and indirectly harms performance, while self-promotion unexpectedly reduces exhaustion. The effects of both tactics on performance appraisals depend on supervisors' age: supplication is detrimental with younger supervisors but becomes positive with older ones; self-promotion shows the opposite pattern. These findings offer new insights into when and how impression management helps or hinders sales effectiveness.

Track: Sales Management and Personal Selling