

SIGNALING MY OCB SO THE BOSS VIEWS ME AS PROMOTABLE: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL OF OCB, IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT, AND CAREER AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is extra-role, discretionary behavior exemplified by individuals going above and beyond formal job duties. Examples of such behavior include helping a co-worker who has a heavy workload, or maintaining a positive attitude about work when in challenging circumstances. While research suggests OCB positively impacts individual-level outcomes, recent scholarship has critiqued the assumption that individuals may limitlessly accrue positive benefits from their citizenship behavior. In essence, an employee's finite time and energy create a trade-off between tasks required for his or her job and OCB. Depending on the organizational context, favoring OCB over task performance may be detrimental to an employee's personal career outcomes, such as promotions and salary progression.

A research team comprised of Dr. Grace Lemmon (DePaul University), Eric J. Michel (UIC), Dr. Sandy Wayne (UIC), and Dr. Jenny Hoobler (University of Pretoria, South Africa) investigated two research questions to determine the extent to which employees may reap career benefits from engaging in OCB.

1. When is OCB more or less effective?
2. How might employees manipulate the visibility of OCB to maximize effectiveness?

The researchers surveyed 110 employees and their supervisors of a Fortune 100 packaging and transportation company to investigate the research questions.

Implications of the Results:

Findings from this study suggest:

- ***OCB is more effective for employees' careers and their organizations when attention is consciously directed toward OCB effort.*** OCB had the greatest impact through managers' promotability perceptions when an employee managed the impressions held by the manager. Greater promotability was linked to employee career benefits, including higher salary, reduced turnover, and increased training and development.
- ***Manager perceptions of employee's behavior, rather than simply employee behavior alone, yield career gains.*** In this manner, the authors discovered that it is important for employees to intentionally self-promote their OCB and to engage in ingratiation behavior with their manager to ensure their manager is aware they are going above and beyond their formal job duties. Absent intentional influence, the threshold for visibility

may be high, resulting in employees engaging in OCB that may not be noticed by managers.

Moving forward, the authors suggest:

- Employees may be wise to simply “call attention” to the OCB they engage in.
- Managerial attention to OCB may significantly impact employees’ career potential.

This study was funded by a grant from the UIC Institute for Leadership Excellence and Development (iLEAD).