**Creating an impression**

DuBrin, Andrew J. (2011), Impression management in workplace research, theory, and practice, New York and London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, paperback, £36.99, ISBN: 978-0-415-87174-7, pp.231.

Andrew DuBrin is a Professor Emeritus at the Rochester Institute of Technology’s College of Business, a former departmental chairman and team leader. He is an accomplished author and speaker with a strong managerial focus, emphasising leadership and human relations aspects of organisational interactions which extends ‘Impression Management’ (IM) in the workplace and even an entire organisation. He is a fluid writer whose books are renowned for concepts, application and skills acquisition. The subject of impression management has been the focus of attention in scholarly literature for more than 45 years and aroused the interest of career advisors and HR specialists for about 75 years. However, the recent global crisis has posed a greater challenge to employers and employees, as choice candidates in this era of high competition with few vacancies and has made the subject of impression management more relevant than ever. Andrew thus recognises reasons for the effective use of IM and has produced a guide based on scholarly research and theory with emphasis on practise.

The book is excellent in positioning IM within the context of contemporary organisation. Each of the 11 chapters has comprehensible learning objectives, activities and a wide choice of case material covering a diverse range of IM at every level in the organisation. The opening chapter traces the historical background of IM thereby offering ten distinctive definitions and explanations. He then links it to a two-component model of Leary and Kowalski on motivation for and the construction of IM. It demonstrates how IM is perceived as a major factor in attaining career and personal success. The next chapter explores the subject matter further as a control or cybernetic process by employing the cybernetic model of IM by Bozeman and Kacmar. The motivational implications for the target, specifically the key role of feedback by this model exposes readers to the intricacy of IM in the workplace. The chapter on individual and organisational contributing factors suggest different tactics of IM. Individual differences are a major factor that determines the extent an individual engages in it. Other factors include self monitoring, Machiavellianism, trustworthiness, gender differences in communication, organisation culture, social networks and others. All these tactics depend on what would fit the target’s need and interests, and communicate the right information for IM to the target. Chapter 4 describes the substantive approaches to self-presentation as an IM technique in two forms: self-presentation of characteristics and behaviours that presents an individual as a contributor in the section/organisation or emphasis aspects of self that relates directly to work accomplishment. However, the general strategy for positive IM is to avoid creating a negative one. The following chapter refers to surface-level approaches to self-presentation which describes acts that make a person look good outwardly rather than personality or cognitive traits. This surface level has a great impact on IM, it directs others perception about the person and consequently on the treatment accorded such a person.

The book’s 6th chapter expresses IM by enhancing others, which involves ingratiation, flattery with credibility, political correctness tactics and other enhancement techniques that are essential for winning a competitive edge. Chapter 7 records a self-protection techniques framework for managing IM by covering up major mistakes by that may affect self esteem, an example of this would be self-handicapping. A principal focus of IM is for the purpose of job search and the performance evaluation that is addressed in chapter 8. The tactics for employment interview IM with the factors related to a choice of appropriate tactics are discussed and a performance evaluation blip that can facilitate better enhancing ratings recommendations for promotion is also given attention.

The next two chapters are imperative for equipping readers through specialised chapters directed specifically at the leaders and organisations. Organisation leaders are not exempt from this IM manual. Chapter 9 addresses the need for leaders to project a leadership image. The effect of IM in projecting, creating and maintaining charismatic leadership style and other leadership traits and competencies for effectiveness is expatiated. Framing, scripting, staging and performing are essential tactics for understanding the ways in which charismatic leaders can employ IM. Moreover, organisations are evaluated on the basis of the image projected and also serve a competitive advantage. Suggestions on how corporate organisations can manage and upgrade their reputations are postulated. The last chapter ended on a note of functional and dysfunctional consequences of IM. An emphasis was made throughout the book on the ethical utilisation of IM for positive results for individual and organisation thus distinguishing it from unethical methods.

In general, this book is a timely contribution that examines a modern phenomenon with a provision of academic insights about IM in the workplace but if inculcated as a habit, the workplace and homes will be a better place to live with one another. The strengths of this book are (1) the ease of reading without ambiguity; (2) the in-text case studies and examples that gives clarity to the doctrine of IM; (3) different self-appraisal measures for self-discovery; (4) the guidelines for practical applications and practice that offers realistic assistance in transforming the literature into practical experience; (5) the empirical results of research buttress a lot of issues, demonstrating that they are not mere opinions of the writer. An example of this is the Gilmore and Ferris (2001) field experiment on 62 employment interviewers in which a key finding is that IM techniques influenced interviewer judgments rather than objective job qualifications. These are relevant to students, practitioners, academia, job qualifications. These are relevant to students, practitioners, academia, prospective employees and would-be employers.

The book has been designated basically for scholars and professionals. However, such limitations tend to be restrictive.IM theorists argue that a primary motive is to be viewed by others positively and avoid being viewed negatively, which is everybody’s ambition. Thus, I propose the book is recommended as a manual for anyone involved in social interactions or any form of organisation, whether at home or in society.

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