A common and essential feature of organizations is the requirement for members to subordinate personal interests when they conflict with the generalized obligations prescribed by the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978). However, organizations are never completely successful in persuading employees to subordinate their own personal aspirations when they conflict with organizational goals. The inevitable disagreement between personal and organizational goals contributes to the political drama of organizational life and makes organizations fertile settings for the exercise of social influence (Ferris & Mitchell, 1987; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989).

An organizational event that is replete with opportunities for the exercise of social influence is the annual performance appraisal (Fandt & Ferris, 1987). Unfortunately, while the performance appraisal has received considerable research attention (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984), surprisingly little work has been done to investigate the effects of impression management (IM) in this context. As a result, much of the discussion that follows draws from research on the performance appraisal that only indirectly addresses the role of IM in this area. However, recent signs of scholarly activity are encouraging. For example, several conceptual models expressly addressing the role of IM in the context of the performance appraisal have been proposed (e.g.,

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Villanova & Bernardin, 1989; Wayne, 1987), and a number of empirical studies purposely designed to test social influence hypotheses in the context of appraisals have been conducted (e.g., Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Rubenstien, 1987; Zalesny, 1990).

In an earlier paper, we proposed a four-stage model of rater IM effects on performance appraisal ratings (Villanova & Bernardin, 1989). Also in that paper, we provided numerous examples of how raters could purposely manipulate ratings in order to serve specific motives (e.g., purposely deflate ratings in order to keep valuable employees who might otherwise be promoted or transferred versus purposely inflate ratings so that subordinates might reciprocate with higher ratings of leadership or supervisory competence). There has also been considerable discussion of individual, job, and organizational factors that promote the use of social influence tactics in organizations (e.g., Bandt & Ferris, 1987; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Ralston, 1985). Thus employee motivations for engaging in impression management (e.g., Ferris et al., 1989), their selection of IM strategies (e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), the variable success of these strategies under different situational conditions (e.g., Giacalone, 1985; Mitchell & Liden, 1982), and the rating behaviors that raters employ in order to manage impressions (e.g., Greenberg, 1990) have received some attention as of late.

Notwithstanding this progress, there remains a need to address more specifically what rater motives and what appraisal system characteristics contribute to rating biases. Therefore, our purpose in this chapter is partially to fill this gap in two ways. First, we offer observations of contemporary performance appraisal practices in organizations that promote rating distortion. Second, we review some rater motives that contribute to the occurrence of rating bias. Finally, when possible, we offer some prescriptions for reducing the occurrence of rating bias stemming from the IM concerns of raters.

Features of Appraisal Systems That Promote Rating Distortion

As depicted in the title of this chapter, performance appraisals provide means, motive, and opportunity for the exercise of social influence. The means aspect of the title explicitly recognizes that performance appraisals serve as tools for influencing the behavior of organizational members (Austin, Villanova, Kane, & Bernardin, in press; Cummings, 1983). Motive refers to the increased desire to act in a self-interested fashion when appraisal results are perceived to have personal consequences (see Greenberg, 1984; Stires & Jones, 1969). Finally, when features of the appraisal system are considered favorable to the pursuit of rater personal motives, the appraisal situation may be perceived by raters as an organizationally sanctioned opportunity to behave in a self-interested manner.

Figure 5.1 outlines characteristics of appraisal systems that serve as means for rater impression management by facilitating the manipulation of performance ratings. As shown in the figure, the means of appraisal and rater motives combine to produce perceptions of opportunity to distort ratings purposely in order to serve raters' personal goals. When raters are motivated to distort ratings and they perceive that the means to do so exist, they will take advantage of the perceived opportunity and purposely distort their ratings. In this section we explain the various means (i.e., features of appraisal
Table 5.1 Appraisal Characteristics That Inhibit IM Behaviors

(1) Criteria for appraisal are relevant to the job.
(2) Criteria for appraisal are clearly defined.
(3) Raters are trained on the appraisal process and IM behaviors.
(4) Performance appraisals are conducted more frequently than once a year and/or a performance diary is maintained.
(5) Performance appraisals are targeted at the appropriate level of ratee aggregation.
(6) Performance judgments are made on specific dimensions and are then combined statistically to arrive at an overall rating.
(7) Multiple rater systems (peers, other supervisors, self-ratings) are used.
(8) Raters are held accountable for their rating behavior.

The following section is devoted to rater motivation to distort ratings.

Means

As noted above, means are those aspects of the appraisal system that may contribute to deliberate rating distortion. Though scant research exists on the features of appraisal systems that serve to inhibit or reduce the effects of IM behaviors by raters, some prominent features of appraisal systems seem particularly important in this regard. Table 5.1 presents a list of prescriptions for appraisal characteristics that are most likely to reduce or eliminate attempts to use IM behaviors in the appraisal process and to reduce the effects of any such attempts.

Criteria for appraisal must be relevant. If the criteria upon which ratings are based are irrelevant or, at best, loosely related to organizational goals, raters are likely to approach the appraisal process less seriously. When individual-level ratings are perceived to bear a direct relationship to other indices of organizational success (e.g., productivity, profitability) and administrative action and the accuracy of the ratings are deemed essential to monitoring organizational goal accomplishment, then the rater must balance the personal gains of rating distortion against the consequent costs to the organization of inaccurate diagnostic information. If appraisal data are not perceived as relevant to organizational goals, the rater may discount the importance of accurate ratings and rate in a manner designed to optimize personal goals.

Criteria for appraisal should be clearly defined and verifiable. The greater the specificity of the measurement system—or, conversely, the less the ambiguity in the performance levels—the smaller the impact of IM behaviors by raters. Greater specificity increases verifiability and thus inhibits rating distortion of all kinds. More specific criteria can also affect rater perception of how important accurate appraisal data are to the organization. If the organization has gone so far as to develop specific criteria, raters may feel more obligated to focus on behavior or outcomes relevant to these criteria. Conversely, if the criteria do not refer to specific behaviors or outcomes, but rather to personal traits of the ratee (e.g., dependability, attitude), the ratings are more likely to be contaminated by the personal biases of raters (Cummings & Schwab, 1973). Also, since in the case of trait ratings raters are asked to evaluate persons rather than job performance, raters may be more reluctant to give low ratings for fear that ratees may interpret those ratings personally. Unfortunately, many organizations continue to evaluate performance using formats that require personality ratings of ratees or with dimensions or factors that are not clearly defined (e.g., quality, quantity) (Bernardin & Pynes, 1990).

Nonverifiable criteria invite rating distortion by simply conceding to the rater that “performance is in the eye of the beholder.”. The absence of clearly defined, unambiguous criteria (e.g., output data, attendance records, errors) not only makes for a deficient representation of performance, but also serves as a de facto sanction of arbitrary and capricious rating behavior. One indirect method of verifying ratings, for example, is to obtain information on a group of individual rates from personnel records in the form of absence or output data and to correlate these data with subjective ratings of these criteria. To the extent that subjective ratings correlate with data found in personnel records, increased confidence in the validity of the ratings would have some empirical justification (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

Train raters on the appraisal process and IM behaviors. If an organization has gone to the trouble of developing specific, verifiable criteria relevant to its goals, it may also have gone so far as to install a rater training program to stress the importance placed upon accurate ratings. A comprehensive program is one that involves raters from the start in the development of the rating scale and auxiliary criteria; provides raters with formal training in observation, attributions, and rating; and concludes with training on how to conduct the performance appraisal interview. Since the beneficial effects of rater training tend to dissipate rather quickly (Ivancevich, 1979), it is
advisable to conduct “refresher” training periodically. Bernardin and Buckley (1981) have reviewed various types of rater training and offer caveats for those who see training as a panacea for appraisal problems. Training that focuses on the attributions of performance and possible constraints on performance has been shown to increase rater confidence in performance levels and could thus reduce the effects of ratee IM behaviors as well (Bernardin, 1989).

Conduct more frequent performance appraisals or maintain a performance diary. It may be advisable to conduct more frequent appraisals given the limited human ability to recall and process information (see Cooper, 1981). Research has shown that individuals tend to rate a person in a manner more consistent with their general impression of the person as the interval between observation and rating is extended (Wyer & Srull, 1989). Also, as has been the case with the features reviewed so far, more frequent appraisals underscore the importance placed on appraisal data by the organization. Diary keeping has been shown to increase rating effectiveness and to reduce the effects of a fallible memory (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984).

Determine the appropriate level of ratee aggregation for performance appraisals. Individual ratings of performance are inappropriate in circumstances where the interdependence among work group members precludes a clear determination of an individual’s contribution. Moreover, the ambiguity in individual-level performance stemming from this interdependency might increase the effectiveness of ratee impression management behavior on the part of individual group members (Villanova & Bernardin, 1989). In such cases it is advisable to aggregate performance to the group level and rate at this level.

Avoid overall or global performance judgments. Decomposed ratings are those that require raters to evaluate ratees’ performance on multiple tasks or dimensions. Holistic judgments are global evaluations of performance. Most appraisal situations require a rater to make decomposed judgments of performance and then to make a single overall rating of performance. Research has shown that this rating procedure results in low agreement among raters with respect to overall ratee performance (Lyness & Cornelius, 1982). Longenecker, Sims, and Gioia (1987) found that raters faced with the combined decomposed-holistic judgment task “tended to inflate the overall rating rather than the individual appraisal items.” And, not surprisingly, “although the overall rating was generally the last item on the appraisal form, this overall rating was determined first; then the executive went back and completed individual items” (p. 187). A better procedure would have raters provide the decomposed judgments and then have these judgments combined statistically into an overall evaluation (Bernardin & Kane, in press; Jako & Murphy, 1990).

Use multiple-rater systems. Single-rater systems (typically using the immediate supervisor as the sole rater) are the most common approach to performance appraisal in industry today (Bernardin & Pynes, 1990). However, peers, subordinates, higher-level supervisors, the ratee, and clients or customers could serve as possible sources of data for pooling performance information. Multiple-rater systems have several advantages. First, because different sources occupy different perspectives from which to observe ratee performance, the use of multiple raters provides a more complete representation of ratee performance; some sources occupy better positions than others to observe critical aspects of ratee performance. Second, multiple rater sources tend to be more accurate. Combining the judgments of different rating sources reduces the influence of bias present in any single rating. Finally, multiple-rater systems can highlight rating inconsistencies and thus serve as a deterrent to rating distortion.

Hold raters accountable for their rating behavior. Holding raters accountable for their ratings by establishing a performance feedback and formal appeals process is another way to reduce the impact of IM behaviors. A feedback and appeals process places the rater on notice that ratings will be discussed with ratees and that the rater may be required to defend his or her ratings. However, while having an operational feedback and appeals process might well reduce the incidence of deliberately deflated ratings, it may also have unintended side effects, such as a general hesitancy of raters to give low ratings (Larson, 1986, 1989). We discuss this issue at greater length below.

Rater Impression Management Motives

We have so far reviewed how characteristics of appraisal systems can foster or dissuade deliberate rating distortion. In this section we focus on factors in the appraisal context that provide motives for raters to manipulate their ratings purposely (see Figure 5.1).

Motives

Leary and Kowalski (1990) recently proposed a two-component model of impression management consisting of impression motivation and impression construction. Impression motivation is defined as the desire of individuals
to generate specific impressions in others' minds in order to maximize social and material outcomes, maintain self-esteem, and/or cultivate a particular public identity. Impression construction is the process of choosing the kind of impression to create and deciding exactly what behaviors would be effective in transmitting such an image. Our concern in this section is largely with impression motivation among raters. Impression construction, or the choice of rating strategies by raters for impression management purposes, has received attention elsewhere (see Villanova & Bernardin, 1989).

Intended use of appraisal data. When appraisal data are used for important personnel decisions such as promotions, merit increases, or layoffs, rater motivation to distort ratings may be more pronounced due to the potential implications of ratings for ratee social, economic, and/or political status in the work group or organization (Ferris et al., 1989). Of course, since the implications of such ratings for the ratee are so significant, the rater is likely to approach the ratings in a more studied manner, perhaps mindful of the potential implications the ratings may have for future rater-ratee interactions (Bernardin & Villanova, 1986; Longenecker et al., 1987). To the extent that ratings are perceived as critical by management, there could also be greater accountability for raters and thus less motivation to distort ratings.

Rater role in the selection of work group members. Schoorman's (1988) data on escalation bias in performance appraisal suggest that raters tend to inflate the performance ratings of ratees for whom raters have agreed with and participated in the original hiring decision. What's more, Schoorman also found that raters gave lower ratings to those ratees for whom the raters disagreed with and participated in the decision to hire. While Schoorman's data were interpreted in terms of escalation of commitment to a previous decision, the findings are also consistent with an impression management explanation. That is, in the organization studied by Schoorman, raters' decisions to hire or reject applicants were known to the personnel director and the raters' supervisors. It is very likely that the impression management concerns of raters to appear accurate in their ability to forecast future employee success may have contributed to the rating bias. We would expect that more public disclosure of an employment decision by a supervisor would result in a correspondingly greater concern with the accuracy of the initial decision and serve as a catalyst for rater impression motivation.

Rater trust in the appraisal process. If raters have low trust in the appraisal process, they are more likely to use the ratings for impression management purposes. Bernardin and Orban (in press) administered a questionnaire called TAPS (Trust in the Appraisal Process Survey) to raters that asked them to indicate the extent to which the "typical supervisor" in the department or organization would purposely distort ratings (e.g., inflate ratings). The reasoning behind the questionnaire was that the "typical supervisor" conducts performance appraisals in the context of the way in which other raters approach the task. Bernardin and Orban found that to the extent that raters felt the typical supervisor would inflate ratings, they themselves tended to rate more leniently. If raters perceive that the appraisal process is used by other raters to "bask in the reflected glory" (Cialdini, 1989) of their subordinates' success, they are likely to follow suit themselves. Experimental data from Greenberg (1983, 1984) similarly illustrate that raters tend to inflate ratings of their subordinates' performance in order to convey an image of successful management. On the other hand, in a low-trust environment some raters may purposely deflate ratings as an attempt to minimize deviation from prescribed behavior. Cummings (1983) notes that interpersonal trust and trust between individuals and the organization can reduce rater use of performance appraisal as a control mechanism to correct deviant behavior.

Rater need for social approval. Some individuals may have a greater need for social approval and so respond more favorably to social influence attempts in order to maintain others' positive regard. They may also go to great lengths in order to avoid confrontation with others. Some research supports the view that particular leadership styles or traits may be related to rating inflation. Klores (1966) found that supervisors who scored higher on the "consideration" dimension of a leadership scale tended to make more lenient ratings of their subordinates. To the extent that this dimension is related to a need to maintain friendly relationships with subordinates or to avoid confrontations regarding judgments of performance, consideration may also be related to susceptibility to social influence attempts. A high need to avoid confrontation may also affect the way the rater attends to and stores performance-related information. Such a motivation, for example, may foster greater attention to the affective components of a supervisory-subordinate relationship and less attention to the observation and encoding of information related to performance. Such an orientation at the encoding, storing, and integration components of the performance appraisal process may facilitate greater reliance on other sources (ratees themselves) for information about performance and constraints on performance and ultimately less confidence in a rater's performance ratings. Such conditions would further increase the probability of inflated ratings.
Rater self-efficacy in providing negative performance feedback. In 1986, we published a study reporting the results of a survey we administered to actual participants of appraisal systems (administrators, supervisors, subordinates) (Bernardin & Villanova, 1986). We asked them to rate 20 factors (nominated by an independent group of similar respondents) thought to be potential causes of rating inaccuracy. We found that the factor deemed most responsible for rating inaccuracy in organizations from the perspective of subordinates (i.e., ratees) was that raters rate some employees higher than deserved as an attempt to please certain employees. Also, supervisors (i.e., raters) reported that a significant source of rating error stemmed from their desire to avoid confrontations with ratees. Laboratory research corresponds with our questionnaire findings; Fisher (1979) found that the ratings by raters who anticipated future contact with ratees exhibited greater leniency than the ratings by raters who did not expect any future contact.

In another study with actual appraisal participants, Napier and Latham (1986) found that raters perceived the use of incidents to support an unfavorable rating would reduce their own chances of promotion. They conclude, "Apparently, appraisers feared the organizational consequences of 'making waves' with their subordinates" (p. 833).

In addition to the leadership instrument discussed above, another instrument shown to be related to rating leniency is the Performance Appraisal Self-Efficacy Scale (PASES), which purports to measure a rater's expectation of personal efficacy regarding the appraisal process (see Table 5.2). High scores represent low self-efficacy and predict higher rating leniency (Bernardin & Kane, in press). The PASES may also predict susceptibility to IM behaviors, since many IM behaviors are directed at making the rater aware of ratee perspectives on levels of performance and attributions of effective and ineffective performance. Such IM behaviors could thus increase the rater's fear of confrontation over an impending appraisal and, for those raters with difficulties in this area, increase the probability that the rating will be adjusted. Raters who are generally uncomfortable in the role of judge or in making decisions about people may also be more willing simply to accept the perspective of the ratee on causes and levels of performance outcomes. The PASES could be used as a diagnostic instrument to identify raters who may be prone to leniency bias in order to avoid confrontations with subordinates. Raters so identified could be provided with some form of assertiveness training so that they might feel more confident in executing their appraisal responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2 Performance Appraisal Self-Efficacy Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indicate the degree of discomfort you would feel in the following situations. Answer as honestly as possible what is true of you. Do not merely mark what seems &quot;the right thing to say.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rate each item on the following scale:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = high discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = some discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = very little discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = no discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Telling an employee who is also a friend that he or she must stop coming into work late.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Telling an employee that his or her work is only satisfactory, when you know that he or she expects an above satisfactory rating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Talking to an employee about his or her poor performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Conducting a formal performance appraisal interview with an ineffective employee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Asking an employee if he or she has any comments about your rating of his or her performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) Telling an employee who has problems in dealing with other employees that he or she should do something about it (take a course, read a book, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) Telling a male subordinate that his performance must improve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8) Responding to an employee who is upset over your rating of his or her performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9) Conducting a formal appraisal interview with an effective employee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(10) Letting an employee give his or her point of view regarding a problem with performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Giving a satisfactory rating to an employee who has done a satisfactory (but not exceptional) job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(12) Having a subordinate disagree during an appraisal interview.</td>
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<td>(13) Being challenged to justify an evaluation in the middle of an appraisal interview.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14) Being accused of playing favorites in the rating of your staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15) Recommending that an employee be discharged.</td>
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<td>(16) Telling an employee that his or her performance can be improved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(17) Telling an employee that you will not tolerate his or her taking extended coffee breaks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(18) Warning an ineffective employee that unless performance improves, he or she will be discharged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) Telling a female employee that her performance must improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) Encouraging an employee to evaluate his or her own performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals are generally reluctant to transmit bad news to others (Tesser & Rosen, 1975), but being visible to the recipient of the bad news is particularly distressing. This was demonstrated in an experiment by Bond and Anderson (1987) in which subjects were asked to communicate either favorable or unfavorable feedback to a peer about his or her performance on an intelligence test. Also, subjects were led to believe that they would be either visible or not visible to the test taker. Bond and Anderson found that
subjects who were led to believe they were visible to the peer in the test failure condition took twice as long to deliver feedback as did subjects in any other group. Also, subjects who were both visible and delivered negative feedback also reported greater discomfort than subjects in any other condition. Of course, in most appraisal systems, performance feedback to subordinates is typically communicated by the immediate supervisor who also completed the ratings. Insofar as the rater is required to justify the ratings, feels discomfort in conveying negative feedback, or perceives that negative feedback may harm future rater-ratee interactions, the rater will have ample incentive to distort ratings (Bernardin & Kane, in press; DeCotiis & Petit, 1978).

Rater perceptions of leader-member relations. Raters’ impression motivation is probably more acute in circumstances of poor leader-member relations. This was indirectly illustrated by Kipnis and Vanderveer (1971). Further evidence for the effect of group composition on rating behavior comes from the work of Mitchell and Liden (1982), who found that a poor-performing subordinate was rated more positively and the remaining well-performing group members more negatively when the poor performer possessed good social and/or leadership skills than when the poor performer was low on these factors. Mitchell and Liden also report field data that suggest supervisors direct less severe responses toward group members who perform poorly but are well liked by other group members. Other evidence supports the contention that within-group variability in leader-member relations can serve as a catalyst for rater impression motivation (e.g., Grey & Kipnis, 1976).

Individual differences in justice motives or the costs associated with specific rating responses might mitigate the occurrence of opportunistic rating behavior. For example, if ratings are tied to reward distributions, more “equity-sensitive” raters (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987) may be more reluctant to distort ratings if such behavior results in a nonequitable distribution of rewards. Likewise, if the group maintains a strong equity norm such that deviations from this norm result in the withdrawal of group approval (i.e., punishment), the rater may be less inclined to distort ratings for fear of undermining group cohesiveness or the leader-member relationship (see Reis & Gruzen, 1976; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973).

Rater commitment to the organization’s mission. Another motivational variable that may be related to rater susceptibility to IM influence is rater organizational commitment. Raters who embrace the organizational mission and strategic goals tend to be more performance oriented in their managerial capacities and thus may be less susceptible to rater behaviors related to the affective components of manager-subordinate interaction. While managers high in organizational commitment may certainly seek to establish and maintain close working relationships with subordinates, such a goal is predicated on the assumption that such relationships are essentially good for business. Managers less committed to the organization and its mission may be primarily motivated to gain popularity, friendships, and generally amiable working relationships so as to avoid discord and confrontation.

Criteria used to evaluate raters’ ratings. In some instances the ratings assigned to subordinates may be used by superiors to make inferences about the raters’ supervisory behavior. High ratings may lead to different inferences as to what was responsible for the high ratings. The superior may infer that the ratings reflect an instance of effective supervision, or that the work group may consist of exceptionally talented members, or, simply, that rater leniency may be wholly responsible for the high ratings. Each of these inferences leads to a different image of the rater. The rater’s impression management task then becomes one of anticipating superior reactions to different rating levels. If, for example, the rater believes his or her superior prefers lower ratings, the ratings may be manipulated to reflect a severity bias so that the superior may conclude the rater is a taskmaster. Of course, attempts to appease one constituency (e.g., superiors who prefer ratings that are normally distributed) may lead to antagonism with another (e.g., subordinates who desire high ratings; Villanova & Bernardin, 1989). When rating criteria in addition to rating level are adopted, such as agreement with other raters or peer ratings, the rater’s attempt at impression management through ratings becomes more difficult because he or she does not have direct knowledge of the ratings provided by other raters or work group members.

Moreover, if the organization has a corrective policy regarding incidents of rating disagreement (i.e., the ratings are analyzed and a rater found to be rating too high or too low is identified and counseled about his or her rating behavior), then the propensity to distort ratings deliberately might be mitigated by the perceived costs of such allegations.

Summary

When raters who are motivated to distort ratings are provided with the means to do so, they may use the ratings toward some political end. However, as we have tried to illustrate, many situational and dispositional factors
influence the likelihood and magnitude of such rating distortion. The problems that rater IM strategies pose for human resources management professionals are daunting, but, nonetheless, increased awareness of the phenomenon serves at least to highlight the need for further understanding of the effects of IM on appraisals.

Given the myriad IM strategies available to raters and the resource constraints on personnel and human resources management departments, it may be wishful thinking to believe that an appraisal system could be designed that would be completely free of deliberate rating distortion. However, some progress toward that end could be made by incorporating some of the more positive characteristics discussed above. As noted by one of the participants in the Longenecker et al. (1987) study, “I guess the biggest thing is that people are led to believe that it is a management tool that works; it’s got to start at the top” (p. 186).

References


Impression Management and Exit Interview Distortion

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Competition for goods and services is occurring on a global rather than national basis. Moreover, remaining competitive will primarily be a function of the effective use of human resources in the organization. Organizations are beginning to realize that it is an expensive proposition not only to attract competent workers but also to retain them by providing an environment conducive to the creativity and innovation that is critical for the firm’s survival. Managing turnover is one of the keys to managing these crucial human resources. Judicious handling of turnover can ensure a consistent infusion of fresh ideas and new energy within the employee ranks. Replacement costs, such as recruiting, hiring, and paying market value for new employees, can be high, however (Casio, 1982; Mercer, 1988). Thus unlimited turnover is not cost-effective; replacement costs dictate an upper limit to acceptable turnover. Moreover, the psychological costs of turnover can include apprehension and distrust among employees who remain with the organization.