Reports

It's not just what you say but when you say it: Self-presentation and temporal construal ☆

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ABSTRACT

Three experiments demonstrated that the use and effectiveness of self-presentation strategies are affected by time. In Experiment 1, participants used more indirect self-presentation statements for the distant than near future, but used more direct self-presentation statements for the near than distant future. In Experiment 2, participants for whom indirect self-presentation strategies were made accessible rated a future interview as more temporally distant than those for whom direct self-presentation strategies were made accessible. In Experiment 3, participants rated their self-presentation attempts as more effective if they used direct strategies for the near future and indirect strategies for the distant future. Implications for studying the timing of self-presentation and its relation to temporal construal levels are discussed.

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I been in the right place but it must have been the wrong time
I'd have said the right thing but I must have used the wrong line
Mac Rebennack (a.k.a. "Dr. John"), *Right Place, Wrong Time*.

Several decades of research have demonstrated that people try to present themselves favorably and that this is a critical element to successful social interactions (for reviews, see Cialdini, 1989; Pratkanis, 2007; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Effective self-presentation can help a person to attain social power, achieve social and material resources, and receive social approval (Baumeister, 1982). But self-presentation researchers have thus far focused mainly on what is said and on how the self is presented. Our research extends this literature by examining a heretofore relatively neglected but potentially critical variable: the role of time on the use and perceived effectiveness of different self-presentation strategies. We suggest that people's attempts to present themselves favorably are either successful or fall flat, not just because of what they say or how they say it, but because of the timing of particular strategies.

Indirect and direct self-presentation strategies

Self-presentation strategies, or tactics, can be classified into two major categories, *indirect* and *direct* (for a review, see Cialdini, 1989). With indirect self-presentation, people highlight mere connections with others in order to look good (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980); for example, a person might describe the accomplishments of those with whom he or she is only associated ("I grew up in the same hometown as Albert Einstein"). People most commonly associate with successful others (e.g., *basking in reflected glory*; Cialdini et al., 1976) and dissociate with unsuccessful others (e.g., *cutting off reflected failure*; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). With direct self-presentation, people instead highlight aspects of their own experiences in order to look good (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1995); for example, a person might describe his or her own personal accomplishments ("I have a Ph.D. in physics"). Direct strategies can include various techniques such as modesty, self-disclosure, and favorable self-description (see Schütz, 1997).

One key difference is that indirect self-presentation strategies emphasize more global, abstract, and associationistic representations than do direct self-presentation strategies (Pratkanis, 2007). For example, research on basking in reflected glory indicates that people will use the pronoun "we" or wear team clothing to associate themselves with successful others (Cialdini et al., 1976) and these abstract representations influence how favorably they are viewed (Carter & Sanna, 2006). People will use "they" or other dissociative strategies to decrease connections with unsuccessful others. In contrast, direct self-presentation strategies emphasize more specific,

concrete, and particularistic representations (Pratkanis, 2007). For example, research has shown that one strategy is to directly present specific and favorable descriptions of one's own accomplishments in order to look good (Schütz, 1997). Because they differ in levels of abstraction, we suggest that that time is a crucial but thus far unstudied variable when attempting to fully understand when, why, and how self-presentation strategies operate.

Temporal construal and self-presentation

Our hypotheses are consistent with Construal Level Theory (CLT; for a review, see Trope & Liberman, 2003), which suggests that people represent events differently depending on their temporal distance. According to CLT, temporal construal is a generalized heuristic that develops out of past experiences with the distant and near future: distant futures are represented in global, abstract, and superordinate form (*high-level construals*); whereas near futures are represented in specific, concrete, and subordinate form (*low-level construals*; Liberman, Sagristano, & Trope, 2002; Nussbaum, Trope, & Liberman, 2003; Sagristano, Trope, & Liberman, 2002).

We suggest that construal level may influence the use and perceived effectiveness of different self-presentation strategies in several ways. Because indirect strategies emphasize global, abstract associations, this may make them a more likely choice when self-presenting in the distant than near future; whereas, because direct strategies emphasize specific, concrete personal accomplishments, this may make them a more likely choice when self-presenting in the near than distant future. In other words, following CLT postulates (e.g., Liberman, Trope, McCrea, & Sherman, 2007), we suggest that, on the basis of past experiences, people develop learned associations between self-presentation strategies and time that match in levels of abstraction, leading them to generally choose indirect strategies for the distant future and direct strategies for the near future.

Moreover, because people have an intuitive awareness of the implications of construal levels (Nussbaum et al., 2003) this may also influence their beliefs about when each strategy is most effective. We thus examine not only whether will people use indirect strategies in the distant future and direct strategies in the near future but also whether part of this association may be built on the perception—also learned through people's prior experiences with the different strategies and their timing—that the strategies are also differentially effective at different temporal distances. The relationship between self-presentation strategies and the timing of their use and perceived effectiveness was examined in three experiments using diverse settings, manipulations, and measures, providing strong support for our hypotheses.

Overview of experiments

Previous research has not yet examined relationships between time and the use and perceived effectiveness of self-presentation strategies. In Experiment 1, we provided an initial test of our hypotheses by varying temporal distance and measuring the type of self-presentation that was chosen. We also measured whether indirect self-presentation strategies are construed at higher levels than direct strategies. In Experiment 2, we provided further evidence for the idea that type of self-presentation strategy and construal level are associated by demonstrating a bidirectional relation between the two: we manipulated the ease or difficulty with which the strategies were brought to mind and assessed effects on construal level. Just as temporal construal influenced chosen self-presentation strategies, the use of the different strategies influenced perceived temporal distance. In Experiment 3, we explored whether indirect or direct tactics are perceived by the user as more or less effective based on temporal distance.

Experiment 1: Construing self-presentation

People have an intuitive awareness of temporal construal levels (Trope & Liberman, 2003). If, as we hypothesize, indirect self-presentation is construed at a higher level than direct self-presentation, people should be more likely to use indirect self-presentation for the distant future than for the near future. The opposite may occur for direct self-presentation, being more likely for the near versus distant future. To further support our hypotheses, we also test whether indirect and direct strategies are in fact construed at higher and lower levels, respectively.

Method

Participants

Forty introductory psychology students participated for extra course credit.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the near future or distant future conditions. They were asked to imagine meeting a potential employer who mentions that his company has a position that might be a good fit for the participant and that an interview would be arranged either immediately (near future) or in 3 months (distant future).

Self-presentation statements

Participants were asked to list statements they would make in the job interview in order to be hired for the position. They were instructed to: "imagine the things that you will tell the interviewer in order to try to make yourself look good because you think the job description sounds perfect. On the lines below, please list statements you will say that would make a positive impression on the interviewer." The request for statements was open-ended, and participants were told they could list anything they desired. These statements were then coded by independent judges on the basis of whether their content focused on indirect versus direct tactics, and temporal construal level, as described in Results.

Participants also responded to several manipulation check items, including when the interview was to take place, and the probability of getting the job. At the conclusion of the experiment, all participants were thanked and debriefed.

Results and discussion

Manipulation checks

All participants correctly responded that the interview was to occur either immediately or in 3 months, depending on condition. Participants in the distant ($M = .78$, $SD = .13$) and near ($M = .74$, $SD = .14$) future conditions did not differ in their perceived probability of getting the job, $t(38) = 1.04$, $p > .20$. Thus, the temporal distance manipulation was effective and results do not depend on perceived probability of getting the job.

Self-presentation strategies

We predicted that participants in the distant future (3 months) condition would list more indirect self-presentation statements than those in the near future (immediate) condition. Three judges who were unaware of hypotheses rated whether each statement was indirect or direct; ratings were reliable for both indirect and direct tactics ($\alpha = .96$ and $\alpha = .97$, respectively).

We conducted a 2 (Time: near, distant) × 2 (Self-presentation: indirect, direct) ANOVA on the number of indirect and direct statements listed, with the last factor treated as repeated measures. There was a main effect for self-presentation, $F(1,38) = 94.41$,
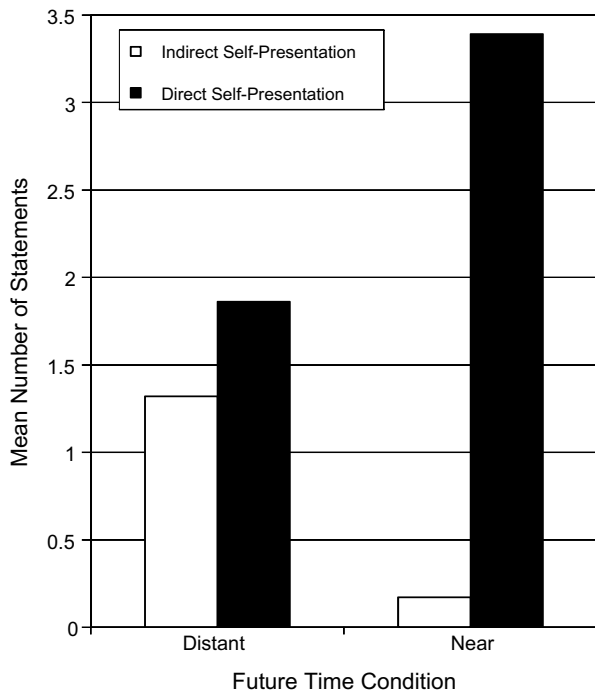
Fig. 1. Mean number of direct and indirect statements as a function of time.

$p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .71$, qualified by an interaction, $F(1, 38) = 47.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .56$ (see Fig. 1). As predicted, participants used direct self-presentation statements more in the near future ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .70$) versus distant future ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.04$), $t(38) = 5.33$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.73$. In contrast, but also as predicted, they used more indirect self-presentation statements in the distant future ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .95$) than near future ($M = .17$, $SD = .38$), $t(38) = 4.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.59$.

Relation between strategy and construal level

We predicted that indirect self-presentation statements would be construed at a higher level than direct self-presentation statements. To test this, three judges who were unaware of the hypotheses and different from those who categorized statements as indirect or direct, rated the statements for construal level. These statements were judged on the basis of the following four dimensions (see Trope & Liberman, 2003): *abstract-concrete; primary-secondary; goal relevant-goal irrelevant, and structured-unstructured.*[1] Each statement was rated on a 21-point scale ($-10 = high construal level$ to $+10 = low construal level$). The ratings were reliable and highly related, all αs > .85, and thus the four construal dimensions were averaged.

To test whether self-presentation strategy was related to construal level, the number of indirect statements was subtracted from the number of direct statements, such that positive values indicated more indirect self-presentation. The resulting self-presentation index was regressed on the construal level index. As predicted, the choice of indirect self-presentation strategies was related to higher level construals (and direct self-presentation strategies were related to lower level construals), $\beta = .35$, $t(39) = 2.28$, $p < .05$, $r^2 = .12$.

In sum, the results provided initial support for our hypotheses. First, participants were more likely to use indirect self-presentation strategies in the distant than near future, whereas they were

more likely to use direct self-presentation strategies in the near than distant future. Second, also as predicted, construal level was related to the types of self-presentation strategies that were used by participants: indirect statements were construed at a higher level than direct statements (and vice versa). Together, these findings are consistent with the idea that different self-presentation strategies and time match in levels of abstraction, leading people to choose indirect strategies for the distant future and direct strategies for the near future.

Experiment 2: Strategies influence distance

Our second experiment was conducted to further examine the relation between self-presentation strategies and time by assessing the opposite direction of influence. One additional implication of CLT is that construal influences may be bidirectional (Liberman et al., 2007). To test this possibility, we reversed the direction of influence used in Experiment 1 and examined the effects of self-presentation strategies on perceived temporal distance in Experiment 2. We did this by manipulating participants' accessibility experiences (Schwarz et al., 1991) while holding actual time constant; for example, when people think of events easily they feel subjectively closer to them, but when people find it difficult to think of events they feel subjectively farther away from them (Sanna, Chang, & Carter, 2004).

On this basis, we predicted that participants asked to list three self-presentation statements would find this experientially easy and those asked to list 12 self-presentation statements would find this experientially difficult.[2] Participants who find listing indirect statements easy (or direct statements difficult) should rate the self-presentation task as more distant, whereas participants who find listing direct statements easy (or indirect statements difficult) should rate the self-presentation task as more proximal. This would provide evidence that self-presentation strategies can serve as a cue for perceived distance. Our hypothesis is also consistent with recent research by Alter and Oppenheimer (2008), who demonstrated that ease of thought generation and fluency can influence the degree to which events are represented abstractly or concretely.

Method

Participants

Thirty-two introductory psychology students participated for extra course credit.

Procedure

Participants imagined themselves at a job interview that was to occur one in one month. Both indirect and direct self-presentation strategies were described to participants. Indirect self-presentation was described as follows:

> It is when someone manipulates minimal connections with another person or group in order to look good. For example, you might claim to pull for the same sports team as the person you are trying to impress. You might also try to distance yourself from people that are seen as failures. For instance, if your fraternity was placed on probation for hazing, you might say to other people that you had nothing to do with it and you hardly go to fraternity meetings anymore. You might wear name brands, drop the names of celebrities you have met, or claim a connection with a hometown or alma mater.

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[1] To rule out possible alternative explanations, judges also rated statements on the dimensions of strong versus weak and emotional versus informational. There were no differences between direct and indirect self-presentation on either dimension.

[2] Pilot testing on an independent sample had confirmed that 3 and 12 thoughts were experienced as easy and difficult, respectively, at this task, irrespective of whether thoughts focused on indirect or direct tactics.

Direct self-presentation was described as follows:

It is when you strategically manipulate things about yourself in order to look good. It can include announcing your achievements, for example, talking about awards or honors you won. It can also include being modest about your achievements. For instance, remarking after an MVP performance in a game that it was "a team effort," even though you won the game for the team. It can involve ingratiating yourself to others, complimenting them on things they have done well, in order to appear gracious. It can also involve self-disclosure, telling others information about yourself to make them like you more.

Thoughts listing

Half of participants were asked to list either 3 or 12 statements reflecting indirect self-presentation strategies, whereas the other half were asked to list either 3 or 12 statements reflecting direct self-presentation strategies, which they thought would help them to get the job. Participants rated how easy or difficult it was for them to generate the self-presentation statements on a 21-point scale (-10 = very difficult, $+10$ = very easy).

Perceived temporal distance

Participants rated how subjectively near or far the interview seemed. They read, "Future experiences can sometimes feel close or far away, irrespective of when they will actually occur. With the job interview you imagined in mind, please indicate how close or far away the interview feels to you." Participants responded on two 21-point scales (1 = feels very near, 21 = feels very distant; 1 = feels very close, 21 = feels very far away; see Ross & Wilson, 2002; Sanna et al., 2004).

Results and discussion

Subjective difficulty

A 2 (Statements: 3, 12) × 2 (Self-presentation: indirect, direct) ANOVA on the subjective difficulty measure revealed only a main effect for statements, $F(1,28)$ = 355.89, $p < .001$, η^2 = .93. As expected, participants listing 3 statements (M = 7.69, SD = 2.68) found this easier than those listing 12 statements (M = -8.13, SD = 1.96), $t(30)$ = 19.06, $p < .001$, d = 6.74. In addition, participants asked to list 3 statements listed an average of 2.75 (SD = .58), whereas participants asked to list 12 statements listed an average of 7.13 (SD = 1.86), $F(1,38)$ = 79.03, $p < .001$, η^2 = .74. Thus, our manipulation of subjective difficulty was successful.

Perceived temporal distance

We predicted that participants who listed 3 indirect statements, who found the statement-listing task easy, would rate the interview as feeling farther away than those who listed 12 indirect statements, who found the statement-listing task difficult. In contrast, participants who listed 3 direct statements (experienced as easy) would rate the interview as feeling closer than those who listed 12 direct statements (experienced as difficult).

To examine this, the two temporal distance items were correlated, $r(31)$ = .95, $p < .001$, and were averaged. A 2 (Statements: 3, 12) × 2 (Self-presentation: indirect, direct) ANOVA revealed only a significant interaction, $F(1,28)$ = 12.96, $p < .001$, η^2 = .32 (see Fig. 2). As predicted, participants using indirect self-presentation rated the interview as more temporally distant when listing 3 (M = 14.50, SD = 4.38) than 12 statements (M = 8.44, SD = 3.88), $t(28)$ = 2.93, $p < .01$, d = 1.47. Conversely, but also as predicted, participants using direct self-presentation rated the interview as more temporally near when they listed 3 (M = 8.00, SD = 3.56) than 12-statements (M = 12.56, SD = 4.78), $t(28)$ = 2.18, $p < .05$, d = 1.08.
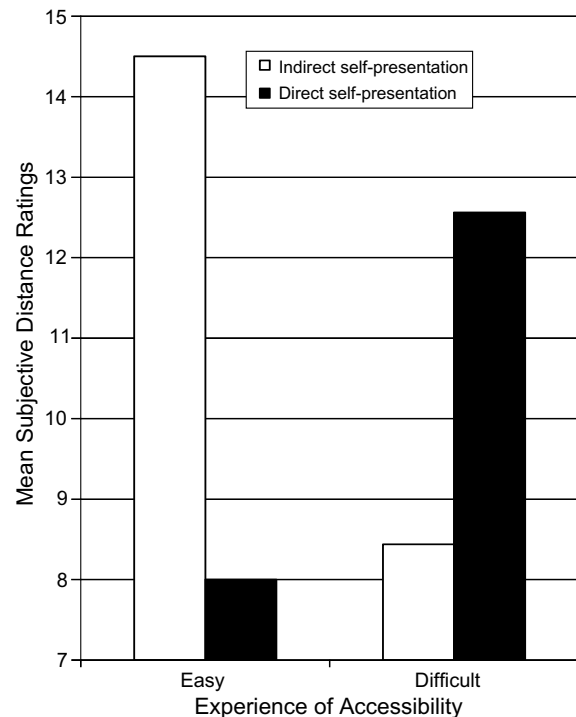

Fig. 2. Mean subjective temporal distance ratings as a function of thought-listing and self-presentation type.

In sum, Experiment 2 provided further evidence for the relation between self-presentation strategies and time by demonstrating that influences can be bidirectional. Just as temporal distance was found to influence the self-presentation strategy chosen in Experiment 1, ease of generating self-presentation strategies influenced perceived temporal distance in Experiment 2. Further support for this latter assumption comes from the fact that ease of generation was related to perceived temporal distance for both indirect self-presentation, β = .39, $t(15)$ = 3.33, $p < .01$, r^2 = .66, and direct self-presentation, β = $-.35$, $t(15)$ = -2.85, $p < .05$, r^2 = .37. When indirect self-presentation strategies came to mind easily the interview seemed farther away, whereas when direct self-presentation strategies came to mind easily the interview seemed closer.

Experiment 3: Perceived strategy effectiveness

Because people are aware of the implications of construal levels (Nussbaum et al., 2003), it also seems likely that they may adjust their self-presentation strategies based upon what they believe will be most effective. Experiment 3 was thus designed to go beyond simply assessing the relation between strategy and construal (Experiments 1 and 2) by examining whether part of this association may be built on the perception that the strategies are differentially effective at different temporal distances. We predicted that participants using indirect self-presentation strategies who believed the task would occur in the distant future would rate themselves as being more likely to be successful than those who used direct self-presentation strategies. In contrast, participants using direct self-presentation strategies should show an opposite pattern, believing that they will be more likely to be successful in the near than distant future.

Method

Participants

Participants were 61 introductory psychology students who received extra credit.

Procedure

Participants completed the experiment individually. The experiment was described as examining teamwork. When they arrived at the laboratory, they met a confederate who was posing as a team captain. The participants were told the captain would be selecting one more member for the team, which would be competing for a gift certificate valued at $20 per team member. They were told that they would be competing for a place on the team with another participant who was already in a different interview room.

Temporal construal

Temporal distance was varied by changing the date on which the decision about whether they made the team would supposedly occur. Participants in the near-future condition were told that they would interview to be on the team now, and the decision whether they made the team and could compete for the prize would be made immediately following the interview. Participants in the distant-future condition were told that they would interview to be on the team now, but the decision whether they made the team and could compete for the prize would be made in a session of the experiment that would occur in 3 weeks.

Participants were told that the interview was going to take place by computer, and they were given a log-on password to a session of America Online Instant Messenger (IM), which is a service that allows people to "chat" much like they would on a phone, using the computer and typing messages to each other. Participants were told the captain would be asking them three questions to determine whether or not they would make the team.

Indirect and direct self-presentation

Once the participant logged onto IM, the captain asked the first question. Participants were told to answer only the questions asked and to not engage in "small talk" as this could interfere with the study. Participants were asked questions designed to elicit either indirect or direct self-presentation. Indirect self-presentation questions asked participants to link themselves to the achievements of others (i.e., "If you had to describe your hero, who is it and why is that person your hero?"; "What organizations do you belong to?"; "Have you ever met any famous people?"), whereas direct self-presentation questions concerned aspects of the participants' own achievements (i.e., "What is the personal achievement that you are proudest of?"; "Describe a time when you had to work hard to meet a specific goal."; "What awards or honors have you won?"). Thus, the use of indirect and direct self-presentation strategies by participants was varied through the type of questions they answered.

After completing the interview, participants were given a packet that asked questions about how much they thought the interviewer liked them and their chances of winning a spot on the team. Participants were asked to "provide your estimate of the probability of how sure you are that you made the team." Participants also answered, "How much do you think your interviewer liked you?" on a 21-point scale ($-10 = $ *not at all*, $0 = $ *neutral*, $+10 = $ *very much*). All participants were entered into a drawing to select a winner of a $20 gift card.

Results and discussion

We were primarily interested in whether participants believed that the self-presentation strategies were differentially effective based on time. To examine this, we used 2 (Time: near, distant) × 2 (Self-presentation: indirect, indirect) ANOVAs to analyze the data.

Probability of making team

On the measure of perceived probability of making the team, there was only a significant interaction, $F(1,57) = 10.00$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .15$ (see Fig. 3). As predicted, for the distant future, participants
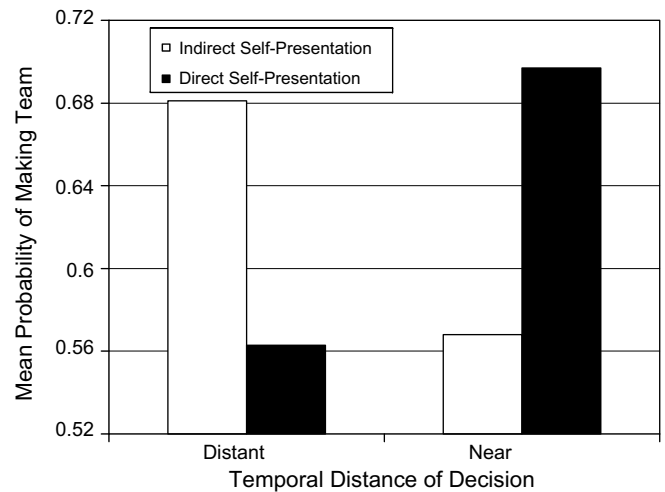

Fig. 3. Mean probabilities of making the team as a function of time and self-presentation type.

thought they had a higher probability of being successful when using indirect ($M = .68$, $SD = .16$) than direct ($M = .56$, $SD = .15$) strategies, $t(28) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $d = .77$. In contrast, but also as predicted, for the near future, participants thought they had a higher probability of being successful when using direct ($M = .70$, $SD = .15$) than indirect ($M = .57$, $SD = .14$) strategies, $t(29) = 2.45$, $p < .05$, $d = .90$ (see Fig. 3).

Perceived likeability

There was also only a predicted interaction on the measure of whether participants thought the interviewer liked them, $F(1,57) = 14.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$. As predicted, for the distant future, participants thought that the interviewer liked them more when they used indirect ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 3.39$) than direct ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 3.80$) strategies, $t(28) = 2.28$, $p < .05$, $d = .83$. In contrast, but also as predicted, for the near future, participants thought that the interviewer liked them more when they used direct ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 4.09$) than indirect ($M = .81$, $SD = 4.31$) strategies, $t(29) = 3.08$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.11$ (see Fig. 4).

In sum, our final experiment elaborates and extends our first two experiments by going beyond simply assessing the relation between strategy and construal by examining whether people also believe that the strategies are differentially effective at different
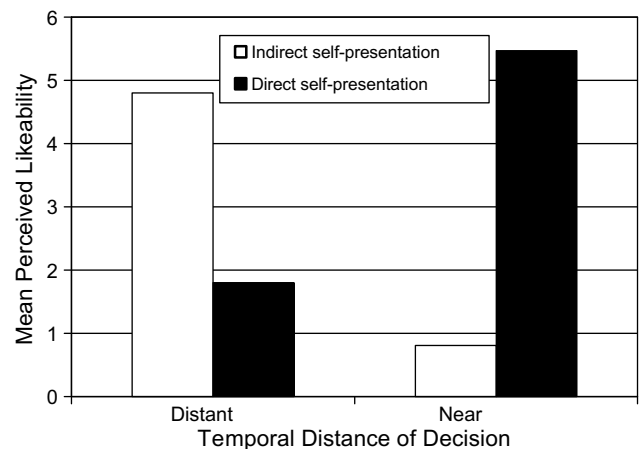

Fig. 4. Mean perceived likeability by interviewer as a function of time and self-presentation type.

temporal distances. Participants viewed their self-presentation attempts as being more successful when they used indirect than direct tactics for the distant future or direct than indirect tactics for the near future. This result was supported both by measures of perceived probability of making the team and by the degree to which participants perceived that the interviewer liked them.

General discussion

Our three experiments examine, and find support for, the novel idea that timing matters when it comes to the use and perceived effectiveness of indirect and direct self-presentation strategies. Experiment 1 demonstrated that indirect self-presentation strategies are used more often for the distant future, whereas direct self-presentation strategies are used more often for the near future. Experiment 2 provided further support for the relation between self-presentation strategy and temporal construal by examining their bidirectional influence: while Experiment 1 indicated that self-presentation type was related to construal level, Experiment 2 indicated that ease of generating self-presentation strategies can also influence perceived temporal distance. In Experiment 3, participants rated their own self-presentation attempts as more effective if they used direct tactics for the near future and indirect tactics for the distant future.

Implications for self-presentation

Explicitly incorporating the role of time as a critical dimension in the self-presentation process opens new avenues of research. Self-presentation is not static but, instead, it is dynamic and often occurs through time. After all, we do not always self-present at the exact same time in every situation. Previous research clearly demonstrates that people use self-presentation in order to foster success (i.e., on job interviews, when making first impressions). However, past investigations have focused mainly on only time periods directly preceding or immediately following an event (Pratkanis, 2007). By examining differences between near and distant futures, we provide a more nuanced picture of how self-presentation operates: indirect and direct tactics have different effects, depending upon the timing of when they are used.

Likewise, by examining how indirect and direct self-presentation strategies operate in tandem, our research offers a broader perspective on the strategies themselves. That is, most research paradigms focus on either delineating specific techniques (e.g., Cialdini et al., 1976; Finch & Cialdini, 1989; Snyder et al., 1986) or on how self-presentation affects one's feelings about oneself (e.g., Carter & Sanna, 2006; Tesser, 1988) or the social environment (e.g., Jones, 1990). We extend the role of self-presentation by delineating how other factors (in this case time) can affect the choice and perceived effectiveness of self-presentation strategy.

Implications for time and temporal construal

The application of CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2003) to self-presentation suggests that it may be used as a basis to explain an even wider range of interpersonal processes. Prior research on temporal construal shows that it changes perceptions of events and other people (see Nussbaum et al., 2003; Sagristano et al., 2002), but our experiments are the first to apply these ideas to self-presentation. The fact that time changes the use and perceived effectiveness of self-presentation strategies is consistent with the idea that people are intuitively aware of the effects of construal levels (Trope & Liberman, 2003). The relationship between temporal construal and various self-presentation strategies is thus an area deserving of fur-

ther research. In fact, it is interesting to speculate whether self-presentation itself is a form of construal. For example, judges' ratings of self-presentation statements in Experiment 1 suggested that indirect strategies, as compared to direct strategies, contained broader and more global attributes that may be more informative for distant future situations and audiences.

Temporal variables are seen as increasingly important to diverse psychological processes (Loewenstein & Elster, 1992; Sanna & Chang, 2006), and temporal effects on self-presentation strategies may not be limited to future perspectives. There is reason to suspect that reflections on the past may also influence self-presentation. For example, temporal self appraisal theory (Ross & Wilson, 2002) advocates that as temporal distance increases we view our negative past selves as more temporally distant. The underlying notion is that we tend to bask with positive past selves and cut off the reflected failure of negative past selves. This type of temporal distancing can also occur for future selves (Sanna, Chang, Carter, & Small, 2006). Our research indicates that indirect self-presentation is represented at a higher construal level, and this may provide a complimentary explanation for self-presentation for the past and future.

Another useful direction would be to examine the effect of the timing of self-presentation strategies on others' views of the self-presenter. Previous research has indicated that temporal perspective can change people's causal attributions of behavior (Frank & Gilovich, 1989), biases in explaining behavior (Nussbaum et al., 2003), and assessment of risk preference (Hsee & Weber, 1997). Self-presentation research usually relies on measuring one's assessment of one's own attempts at self-presentation. Similarly, our Experiment 3 focused on participants' views of the effectiveness of their own self-presentation attempts. However, this does not preclude the possibility that there may be important self-other differences in self-presentation (see Carter & Sanna, 2006), and that this may vary further by temporal perspective. In short, people's attempts to present themselves favorably may be either successful or fall flat, not just because of what they say or how they say it, but because of the timing of self-presentation strategies.

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