



Behavioral Decision Making Group Colloquium Series

is pleased to present



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Goals: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

ABSTRACT

Over 50 years of research has shown that goals lead to increased effort, persistence and improved performance (the good) (Locke & Latham, 2013). However, as summarized in “Goals Gone Wild (Ordóñez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009), goals can lead to unintended consequences such as narrowed attention and increased risk taking (the bad). Worse, goals can lead to unethical behavior in order to meet extremely challenging standards (the ugly). I will summarize over a decade’s worth of research conducted with my colleagues demonstrating that using SMART goals may not be so smart after all!

First, I will discuss the connection between goals, decision making, and unethical behavior (Ordóñez & Wu, 2014; Ordóñez & Welsh, 2015) and summarize the first empirical study to show that goals lead to cheating (Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Douma 2002 and 2004). Then I will summarize a study showing that ethical priming can reduce the negative impact of goals on unethical behavior (Welsh & Ordóñez, 2014a). However, another paper (Welsh & Ordóñez, 2014b) shows that goal setting by its very nature cognitively depletes individuals which leads to cheating. I’ll wrap up by summarizing current projects that investigate the impact of grit and voice in the process for goal selection on unethical behavior.

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