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Organizational Psychology Review 2011 1: 9
DOI: 10.1177/2041386610377228

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Role expansion as a persuasion process: The interpersonal influence dynamics of role redefinition

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Abstract

Evidence establishes that employees often expand their roles to take on broader responsibilities in response to direct requests from others. However, surprisingly little research has investigated the interpersonal influence processes through which individuals convince others to expand their roles. We develop a conceptual framework to explain how senders persuade receivers to accept role expansion requests. Our framework describes why senders often fail to tailor their requests to receivers' values, identifies the conditions under which this systematic bias is eliminated, and suggests strategies for senders to tailor their requests more effectively. Our perspective highlights how role expansion is often a reactive—rather than proactive—process in which interpersonal influence is a key building block.

Keywords

beliefs, extra-role behavior, job attitudes, motivation, organizational citizenship behavior, values

Paper received 25 February 2010; revised version accepted 9 June 2010.

One of the great puzzles of organizational life is that individuals with the same formal job descriptions often define their roles differently (Morrison, 1994). For example, some manufacturing employees define their roles narrowly in terms of completing assigned tasks, whereas others take on broader roles in which they also feel responsible for improving production processes and satisfying customers (Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997); some employees include

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safety behaviors in their role definitions, while others do not (Hofmann, Morgeson, & Gerras, 2003); and some hospital cleaners define their roles narrowly in terms of cleaning rooms, whereas others define their roles more broadly to include caring for patients (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). These variations in role definitions have important consequences for how employees perform their jobs. Considerable research now indicates that those who define their roles broadly are rated by supervisors as more effective (Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, & Hemingway, 2005; Parker, 2007). Because they incorporate a wide range of responsibilities and activities into their roles, employees with broad role definitions are motivated and able to perform their tasks more proficiently, adaptively, and proactively (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007), as well as engage in more frequent helping and citizenship behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, & Purcell, 2004; Morrison, 1994; Tepper, Lockhart, & Hoobler, 2001). In light of this evidence on the benefits of broad role definitions, both scholars and practitioners are interested in understanding when and how employees decide to expand their roles.

Understanding role expansion is particularly important in the context of recent dramatic changes in the landscape of modern work. As organizational structures flatten, and work systems become more dynamic, uncertain, and interdependent, it becomes increasingly difficult to formalize roles into well-specified job descriptions (Griffin et al., 2007; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Mohrman, Galbraith, & Lawler, 1998). Organizations depend on employees to expand their roles to include citizenship, adaptive, proactive, and innovative behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness in often unpredictable ways (Grant & Ashford, 2008). To encourage such expanded role definitions, organizations are providing employees with increasing levels of latitude and freedom (Crant, 2000; Frese & Fay, 2001). The growth in autonomous workgroups (Morgeson, Johnson, Campion, Medsker, & Mumford, 2006), flexible,

autonomous job designs (Parker et al., 1997), virtual teams and teleworking (Cascio, 1999), boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), specialized knowledge work and independent contracting (Barley & Kunda, 2004), temporary work (Ashford, George, & Blatt, 2007), "free agent" arrangements (Pink, 2001), and idiosyncratic employment deals (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006) has given employees more discretion to define their roles in distinctive, unique ways than ever before. These trends have provided employees with more flexibility to choose how broadly versus narrowly they wish to define their roles.

Accordingly, organizational researchers have begun to systematically investigate the factors that affect the breadth of employees' role definitions. Recent research has identified both contextual and individual factors that affect role definitions. From a contextual perspective, researchers have examined how broader role definitions are facilitated by job characteristics such as high autonomy, high control, and low demands (Morgeson et al., 2005; Parker, 1998; Turner, Chmiel, & Walls, 2005), as well as by high-quality supervisor relationships and organizational climates that provide support and procedural justice (Hofmann et al., 2003; Kamdar, McAllister, & Turban, 2006; Tepper et al., 2001). From an individual perspective, researchers have examined how broader role definitions are predicted by higher levels of proactive personality (Parker & Sprigg, 1999), prosocial value orientations (Nauta, De Dreu, & van der Vaart, 2002), and knowledge and skill (Morgeson et al., 2005). Together, these studies have provided valuable insights into how role definitions are affected by job designs, organizational cultures and climates, and individual differences in personalities, values, and abilities. As a result, researchers are beginning to understand the job, relationship, and organizational conditions that are generally likely to motivate role expansion, as well as the types of employees that are more and less likely to expand their role definitions.

However, in studying the general contextual and individual factors that predict broader role definitions, researchers have paid little attention to the interpersonal dynamics of single role-expansion episodes. According to classic perspectives on role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1966), role-expansion decisions typically begin with a sender presenting a role to a receiver, who makes a choice about whether to accept the role. Indeed, research suggests that as much as 75–90% of all help in organizations—one example of taking on an expanded role—is provided in response to a direct request from another person (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Burke, Weir, & Duncan, 1976; Kaplan & Cowen, 1981). These findings indicate that the decision to expand one's role by giving help is most often initiated when a sender presents a request or opportunity. Despite recognition that role expansion is the result of social exchange processes (Hofmann et al., 2003; Tepper et al., 2001), researchers have yet to examine how the dynamics of specific interpersonal exchanges shape whether receivers choose to accept an expanded role when presented with a request by a sender. This is an unfortunate oversight given that interpersonal exchanges are basic building blocks of the organizing process (Weick, 1979).

To address this gap, we develop a theoretical model of the interpersonal dynamics of role expansion. We integrate recent research on expanded role definitions with the literatures on role theory, and influence tactics to conceptualize role-expansion episodes as a persuasion process. Persuasion is particularly relevant to role-expansion decisions because employees often need to be convinced to take on a broader role, given that it is increasingly common that they are already facing competing and overwhelming role demands (Ashford & Northcraft, 2003). This is due in part to the rise of knowledge and project-based work (e.g., Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006), the growing pace and uncertainty of organizational life (e.g., Grant & Parker, 2009; Griffin et al., 2007), and the prevalence of communication and transportation technologies that facilitate virtual, global, around-the-clock

collaboration (e.g., MacDuffie, 2007). All of these demands reduce the time and energy available for expanded roles. Given that time is finite and energy is a limited resource (Hobfoll, 2002), employees must make choices about whether and when to expand each of their roles (Bergeron, 2007). For example, in our own lives as professors, we make countless decisions about whether to take on additional research projects, teaching loads, mentoring and advising duties, reviewing responsibilities, committee service, executive education, and consulting engagements. Similarly, managers must make decisions about how much time and energy to dedicate to interpersonal (figurehead, leader, liaison), informational (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson), and decisional (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator) roles (Mintzberg, 1973).

In light of these competing role demands, convincing receivers to expand their roles can require considerable persuasive effort and skill. Research has shown that small, subtle changes to how requests are presented can produce dramatic variations in acceptance (for reviews, see Cialdini, 2001; Malhotra & Bazerman, 2008). However, the literature on role expansion has yet to consider the implications of the rich body of knowledge that exists about persuasion and social influence. In order to explain how persuasion processes affect role-expansion decisions, we present a descriptive analysis of how senders tend to present role-expansion opportunities, and a prescriptive analysis of how senders can present such opportunities more effectively. Our theoretical model provides a novel perspective on the interpersonal dynamics of the role-expansion process, advancing existing knowledge about role definitions, proactivity and citizenship, and dyadic influence in organizations.

Role expansion as an influence process

A role is a constellation of responsibilities and expectations for action embedded in a social

position (e.g., Callero, 1994; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Lieberman, 1956). Role expansion occurs when individuals choose to incorporate a broader set of responsibilities into their personal definitions of their roles, treating these responsibilities as expectations rather than discretionary activities (Morrison, 1994; Parker et al., 1997). Embedded in this conceptualization are three key features that distinguish role expansion from extra-role behavior. First, role expansion involves changing one's view of a role, not merely enacting a behavior (Morrison, 1994). Second, role expansion requires engagement in a role over time, rather than engaging in a single act (Parker et al., 1997). Third, role expansion involves taking on new responsibilities in addition to existing responsibilities, while extra-role behavior is sometimes undertaken as a substitute for existing responsibilities (Bergeron, 2007).

Scholarly interest in role expansion can be traced back to theoretical perspectives on role innovation (Katz & Kahn, 1966; van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Whereas early work on role theory assumed that roles were static objects assigned by supervisors and accepted by incumbents, these perspectives on role innovation emerged when scholars recognized that role incumbents often exercise agency and proactivity by taking the initiative to modify and enlarge their own role definitions (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Morrison, 1994; Nicholson, 1984; Parker et al., 1997; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). From this viewpoint, role incumbents often have discretion about whether or not to accept a request for role expansion. Building on this observation, our goal is to explain how interpersonal influence processes affect role incumbents' decisions about whether or not to expand a role. Our analysis does not apply to situations in which role expansion is required or coerced; our analysis is bounded to situations in which role incumbents have discretion or freedom of choice about whether or not to accept a

role-expansion request. Our analysis is also circumscribed to situations in which role incumbents are uncertain about whether or not to expand their roles, which is where persuasion and influence techniques are likely to have the greatest leverage.

A core tenet of role theory is that roles are communicated from a sender to a receiver through a social exchange process that occurs over the course of a role episode (Katz & Kahn, 1966). This social exchange constitutes an exercise of dyadic influence, as the sender is attempting to persuade the receiver to accept the role (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Surprisingly, this classic insight from role theory has received little attention in existing research on role definitions and role expansion. In order to understand the interpersonal influence dynamics of role definitions, it is critical to focus on the exchange between the sender and the receiver.

In this exchange, both the sender's presentation and the receiver's values affect the receiver's decision about whether to expand a role. According to expectancy theories of work motivation, individuals are most likely to devote attention, time, and energy to an opportunity when they believe that the opportunity allows them to express or fulfill their values (Vroom, 1964). Consider an illustration from a middle manager at a hospital who was attempting to persuade others to expand their roles to include taking action on issues that were not included in their job descriptions. The manager found it necessary to tailor the presentation to receivers' values:

It depended on who I was talking to. If I was talking to [the chief operating officer], I talked about why we should do it physically. If I was talking to the physicians, I talked about how it would improve their ability to care for their patients. If I was talking to the nursing staff, I talked about how it would improve their work. I didn't talk about finances because I knew they didn't want to hear it. (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, & Lawrence, 2001, p. 727)

This observation is consistent with recent theory and research on influence, which suggests that senders are most likely to succeed in altering the psychological states and behaviors of receivers when the content of the message matches receivers' values (Barry & Crant, 2000; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Miene, & Haugen, 1994). For example, Clary et al. (1994, 1998) demonstrated that potential volunteers found recruiting messages that matched their own values more persuasive. Similarly, the self-concept-based perspective on charismatic leadership suggests that leaders can achieve influence and motivate action by appealing to followers' values (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993; see also Hogg, 2001; Lord & Brown, 2001). Accordingly, we expect that receivers are most likely to expand their roles when senders' presentations emphasize reasons that correspond with their values.

In the following sections, we present a two-stage conceptual analysis of senders' efforts to persuade receivers to expand their roles. In the first section, we offer a descriptive analysis to illuminate the systematic mistakes that senders often make. We explain how senders often fail to match their presentations to receivers' values, and identify social factors that attenuate this error. In the second section, we offer a prescriptive analysis to illuminate the normative steps that can make senders more effective. We explain how senders can match different persuasion principles to different values.

A descriptive analysis: Senders' failure to tailor

Although it is quite logical to expect that senders will tailor their role-expansion requests to receivers' values, the reality is that senders often fail to do so. Social psychological theory and research on information processing reveals a pervasive human tendency to assume that others' values, motivations, and preferences are similar to one's own (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977). This "false consensus" bias, which has

been demonstrated across a wide variety of situations and validated in multiple meta-analytic reviews, is driven by both cognitive and motivational forces (Marks & Miller, 1987; Mullen et al., 1985). From a cognitive perspective, individuals are attracted to similar others; this provides them with selective exposure to others whose orientations match their own, making their own orientations more available and salient (Krueger & Clement, 1994). From a motivational perspective, individuals seek to justify, confirm, and validate their own beliefs, values, and preferences; this leads them to project their own orientations onto others, assuming that they are shared, while selectively attending to information that supports this assumption and discounting information that challenges it (Heath, Larrick, & Klayman, 1998; Kunda, 1990; Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004).

Thus, in many situations, senders tend to interpret role-expansion opportunities based on their own values and understandings of receivers' roles, rather than on receivers' values and role definitions. Of course, this bias is most problematic when senders' and receivers' values and role definitions differ substantially. For example, consider a manager attempting to persuade another manager to join a campus recruiting task force. If the manager holds strong impression management values and views the role in these terms, she will likely emphasize the reputational benefits of gaining visibility as a recruiter, even if the receiver is more concerned with the intrinsic satisfaction of finding new colleagues to mentor. Indeed, research suggests that managers and employees with extrinsic motivational orientations tend to assume that others have extrinsic motivational orientations, while managers and employees with intrinsic motivational orientations tend to assume that others have intrinsic motivational orientations (Heath, 1999; see also McGregor, 1960; Oliver, Bakker, Demerouti, & de Jong, 2005). Similarly, research has shown that when entering negotiations, individuals with proself

or prosocial value orientations each expect their counterparts to share their values (van Kleef & De Dreu, 2002). We therefore predict that when presenting role-expansion opportunities, senders often emphasize reasons that reflect their own values and role definitions.

Proposition 1. Senders' presentations of role-expansion opportunities are based more heavily on their own values and role definitions than on receivers' values and role definitions.

When will senders fall victim to this false consensus bias? It is important to understand the conditions under which senders will focus more heavily on their own values versus on receivers' values. Psychological research identifies three social factors that can draw attention to receivers' values: relative power, role norms, and relationship history.

Relative power. First, we propose that the relative power between senders and receivers will shape which approach senders take in their presentations. When senders have higher power than receivers, they will be more likely to focus inward on their own values; when senders have lower power than receivers, they will be more sensitive to the importance of tailoring their presentations to receivers' values. Social psychological research shows that possessing power tends to increase individuals' attention to their own values, as power implies less dependence on others and imposes demands that limit attentional resources for taking others' perspectives (Fiske, 1993; Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006). Consequently, when senders are more powerful than receivers, we expect that they will tend to focus on their own values. For example, consider a senior consultant inviting a junior consultant to join a *pro bono* consulting project for a nonprofit organization. If the senior consultant genuinely cares about the nonprofit, she is likely to emphasize the opportunities to make a difference, even if the junior consultant is more concerned about reputational benefits.

On the other hand, lacking power renders senders more dependent on receivers, increasing the incentives for senders to tailor their presentations to receivers' values. For example, Cable and Judge (2003) found that when attempting to exert upward influence with their supervisors, managers used influence tactics that matched their supervisors' leadership styles. Similarly, research shows that in interpersonal relationships, parties with lower power invest more time and energy in adapting their behavior to those with higher power (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003). If the junior consultant is asking the senior consultant to pitch in, he will take time to understand the senior consultant's values and highlight the meaningful opportunity to contribute to an important cause, even if his own reasons for involvement focus more heavily on advancing his reputation.

Proposition 2. Relative power moderates the effect of senders' values on their presentations of role-expansion opportunities, such that the lower the sender's power, the sender is (a) more likely to emphasize reasons that match the receiver's values and (b) less likely to emphasize reasons that match the sender's own values.

Role norms. Second, we propose that organizational norms often specify that expanding a particular role is acceptable for a particular reason. When these norms exist, they can serve to align senders' presentations and receivers' expectations. For example, Perlow and Weeks (2002) studied two groups of software engineers ("Ditto" and "Ico") that maintained distinct norms about the reasons for expanding roles to help colleagues. The norms in the Ditto group emphasized how helping provided an outlet for fulfilling one's obligations to reciprocate assistance received. The norms in the Ico group emphasized how helping enabled one to contribute to others and learn new skills. As a result, Ditto engineers who received role-expansion requests expected that if they helped, senders would reciprocate in the future, and

Ditto engineers who sent role-expansion requests expressed a willingness to reciprocate in the future. In contrast, Ico engineers who received role-expansion requests expected to contribute and learn, and Ico engineers who sent role-expansion requests highlighted their own appreciation for help and the potential knowledge and skill to be gained from helping.

These observations suggest that role-expansion norms, and the reasons for expansion nested within these norms, are likely to influence both receivers' expectations and senders' presentations in corresponding directions. Role norms align senders' presentations and receivers' expectations by creating a strong situation, providing clarity about and directing attention toward particular reasons for role expansion (Cooper & Withey, 2009; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Kenrick & Funder, 1988; Meyer, Dalal, & Hermida, 2010; Mischel, 1977). For instance, academic norms often stipulate that expanding one's role as an executive education teacher is undertaken for additional pay, while expanding one's role in mentoring undergraduate honors theses is undertaken based on an intrinsic desire to help students. Thus, when the role-expansion opportunity involves teaching an additional executive education course, faculty members are likely to expect high levels of pay, and program directors are likely to emphasize financial incentives when presenting the request. In contrast, when the role-expansion opportunity involves serving as a reader for an undergraduate honors thesis, faculty members are likely to expect this expanded role to provide enjoyment and meaning, and committee chairs are likely to emphasize these intrinsic benefits when presenting the request. In this way, strong role norms can help to align senders' presentations of role expansion requests with receivers' expectations.

Proposition 3. Role norms moderate the effect of senders' values on their presentations of role-expansion opportunities, such that the stronger the role norms, the more likely

the sender is to emphasize reasons that match the receiver's expectations for the role.

Relationship history. Third, we propose that the relationship history between senders and receivers will shape which approach senders take in their presentations. When senders have an extended relationship with receivers, they are able to gain knowledge about receivers' values. Considerable research in personality psychology shows that as relationship history grows, individuals become increasingly accurate in judging the motivations and values of others (Kenrick & Funder, 1988). Similarly, leadership research indicates that relationships are best developed in "close" situations involving frequent, proximate, repeated interactions (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Through extended interactions, senders gain deeper understandings of receivers' values, and these understandings strengthen their capabilities to transcend their own perspectives and adopt the perspectives of receivers (Grant, 2007; Kramer, 1999; Parker & Axtell, 2001; Weick, 1979). Relationship history thus decreases the likelihood that senders' presentations will be based on senders' own values, and increases the likelihood that senders' presentations will be based on receivers' values.¹ In the absence of relationship history, senders are more likely to guess about receivers' values, and the false consensus bias suggests that their guesses will be heavily anchored by—and thus based on—their own values.

Proposition 4. Relationship history moderates the effect of senders' values on their presentations of role-expansion opportunities, such that the greater the relationship history between a sender and receiver, the sender is (a) more likely to emphasize reasons that match the receiver's values and (b) less likely to emphasize reasons that match the sender's own values.

Thus, a short relationship history is likely to lead senders to focus erroneously on their own

values without sufficiently customizing their presentations to match receivers' values.

A short relationship history is also likely to have a second detrimental effect on senders: leading them to emphasize too many arguments in their presentations. Many senders hold lay theories of influence, suggesting that providing multiple rationales will be more effective. As Rackham (2007, p. 181) explains, senders tend to "believe that there is some special merit in quantity. If we can find five reasons for doing something, then that should be more persuasive than being able to think of only a single reason." Research, however, suggests that fewer arguments are often more successful in achieving influence. If senders highlight multiple reasons for expanding a role, receivers can reject the offer based on the weakest or least personally appealing reason (Rackham, 2007). In addition, emphasizing multiple reasons runs the risk of creating argument dilution, distracting receivers' attention away from the core reason to consider the role, and may "overwhelm the cognitive capacity" of receivers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993, p. 416–417).

We expect that senders are particularly likely to make this argument-dilution mistake when they lack a relationship history with receivers. When senders have a longstanding relationship with receivers, they are able to zero in more effectively on receivers' core values (Kenrick & Funder, 1988), which increases senders' capabilities to tailor their presentations to receivers' values. When senders have little experience interacting with receivers, they are more likely to be grasping at straws to guess receivers' values. In these situations, senders may default to a "shotgun" influence style (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988) in which they fire different reasons at receivers in an attempt to hit their targets. For instance, an executive attempting to convince a new colleague to lead an innovation task force may cycle through different benefits of doing so, including loyalty, enjoyment, recognition, promotion opportunities, and impact on the company's future. If the

executive had a longer history with this peer, she would be in a stronger position to focus in on the one or two reasons that are most consistent with his values.

Proposition 5. Relationship history decreases senders' tendencies to fall victim to argument dilution.

A prescriptive analysis: Normatively matching senders' presentations to receivers' values

Thus far, our propositions have focused on describing the approaches that senders tend to take in presenting role-expansion requests. However, it is theoretically and practically important to understand how senders can increase the likelihood that receivers will accept their requests. As such, in this section, we advance from a descriptive to a prescriptive approach (see Malhotra & Bazerman, 2008). Our objective is to explain how senders can more effectively tailor their presentations to receivers' values. We begin by considering how senders' rational versus inspirational presentation styles can be matched to extrinsic versus intrinsic values. We then turn our attention to how the content of senders' presentations can be aligned with a broader set of values held by receivers.

Presentation style: Rational versus inspirational.

The influence literature has identified nine tactics that individuals can use to alter others' decisions and behaviors: rational appeals, inspirational appeals, consultation, pressure and assertiveness, upward appeals, social exchange, coalition-building, ingratiation, and legitimizing (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996). Research suggests that of these nine tactics, two tend to be most effective in achieving influence in organizations: rational appeals and inspirational appeals (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Although effective influence may entail a combination of both

tactics, because these two influence tactics involve distinct presentation styles, influence attempts can be characterized in terms of a dominant presentation style. Rational presentation styles involve using logical arguments and factual evidence to change the receiver's attitudes and beliefs, while inspirational presentation styles involve appealing to aspirations and ideals to cultivate enthusiasm and positive emotions in the receiver.

In this section, we examine how senders' rational versus inspirational presentation styles are likely to affect the role-expansion decisions of receivers with intrinsic versus extrinsic values. Psychological research indicates that individuals differ in the extent to which their values emphasize intrinsic versus extrinsic reasons for action (Grouzet et al., 2005). Intrinsic reasons for role expansion are inherently valued in their own right, while extrinsic reasons for role expansion are means instrumental to achieving other ends (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994; Rokeach, 1973; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

We propose that a rational presentation style is more likely to motivate role expansion among receivers with extrinsic values, while an inspirational presentation style is more likely to motivate role expansion among receivers with intrinsic values. We base this proposition on psychological theory and research that has identified two discrete information processing systems: the "cool" cognitive system and the "hot" experiential system (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni, 1998; Epstein, 1994; Grant & Wade-Benzoni, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). When the cognitive system is engaged, receivers process information consciously in an analytical, deliberate, calculative, evaluative fashion, making cognition-driven judgments (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Receivers whose cognitive systems are engaged are most susceptible to rational presentation styles, which provide logic, data, and information that can be evaluated systematically and analytically. Inspirational presentation styles, on the other

hand, are likely to frustrate receivers whose cognitive systems are engaged, who will feel irritated that the presentation lacks the "hard facts" necessary to make a calculated decision. Conversely, when the experiential system is engaged, receivers process information viscerally in an intuitive, emotional fashion, making affect-driven judgments (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Receivers whose experiential systems are engaged are most susceptible to inspirational presentation styles, which resonate on an intuitive level. Rational presentation styles, on the other hand, are likely to bore receivers whose experiential systems are engaged, as the information presented is too analytical to stimulate an emotional response.

When will receivers engage their cognitive versus experiential systems? Research suggests that receivers with extrinsic values tend to engage the cognitive system while receivers with intrinsic values tend to engage the experiential system. Indeed, research suggests that extrinsic motivation tends to be guided by cool, calculative decision-making that employees "push" forward while intrinsic motivation is often fueled by hot, energetic emotions that "pull" employees into task absorption (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Grant & Berry, *in press*). Focusing on extrinsic reasons requires receivers to calculate whether the role-expansion request is worth accepting (e.g., DeVoe & Pfeffer, 2007). For example, consider a salesperson on commission seeking to maximize income, who is asked to serve on an internal quality-improvement committee that will take time away from revenue-generating activities. When making a decision about whether to take on the expanded role, the salesperson is likely to use analytical reasoning to evaluate—and perhaps even quantify—whether the financial incentive is worth the effort. Accordingly, receivers with extrinsic values are most likely to take on expanded roles when senders use a rational presentation style that facilitates an analytical evaluation process. This proposition is supported by a study of senders attempting to convince their supervisors to expand their roles

as stewards of environmental responsibility (Andersson & Bateman, 2000). The supervisors appeared to hold extrinsic values, and several senders who succeeded in championing the expanded role

attributed their success to use of formal and businesslike rather than dramatic and emotional language. For example, one champion mentioned that he “used the right business jargon to get [my] point across,” and another claimed that only through formally written memos and correspondence would his superiors pay attention to him. (Andersson & Bateman, 2000, p. 562)

Conversely, focusing on intrinsic reasons shifts the receiver’s mindset away from evaluation and toward curiosity, enthusiasm, and passion (Amabile, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000). For instance, consider a management consultant who cares about educating underprivileged children. When making a decision about whether or not to accept an opportunity to take on an expanded role in leading a new corporate social responsibility youth outreach program, the consultant is likely to respond viscerally and intuitively to inspirational information about the potential impact of the program on children. This intuitive response to the inspirational appeal is unlikely to involve a cost–benefit calculation (e.g., Loewenstein & Small, 2007). Therefore, receivers with intrinsic values are most likely to take on expanded roles when senders use an inspirational presentation style that resonates with and fuels their strong emotional investment in the role.

Proposition 6a. Receivers with extrinsic values are more likely to expand their roles when a sender uses a rational rather than inspirational presentation style.

Proposition 6b. Receivers with intrinsic values are more likely to expand their roles when a sender uses an inspirational rather than rational presentation style.

Presentation content. In the previous section, we explored how the interplay between the *style* of a sender’s presentation and a receiver’s values increases the likelihood that the receiver will accept a role-expansion request. We now turn to the effects of the sender’s presentation *content* as a function of the receiver’s values. In the previous section, we identified intrinsic versus extrinsic as one of the fundamental dimensions along which receivers’ values—and thus their reasons for expanding roles—vary. Psychological research suggests that a second fundamental dimension along which receivers’ values vary is the extent to which their primary concerns are self-focused versus other-focused (Grouzet et al., 2005; Schwartz, 1992). Self-focused reasons for role expansion are based on personal value to the receiver, while other-focused reasons for role expansion are based on contributing value to other people, groups, and organizations (Grant, 2007; Maurer, Pierce, & Shore, 2002; Nauta et al., 2002).² Juxtaposing these two dimensions creates a 2×2 typology of role-expansion reasons: intrinsic self-focused, intrinsic other-focused, extrinsic self-focused, or extrinsic other-focused.

Receivers with extrinsic self-focused values tend to focus on external rewards such as increased pay, promotions, status, avoidance of punishment, and recognition (Grouzet et al., 2005). For these receivers, effective presentations from senders will emphasize personal instrumentalities (Clary et al., 1998), such as the financial, advancement, status, and recognition rewards that can accrue from expanding the role, as well as the potential financial, advancement, status, and recognition losses to be incurred if they do not expand their roles. Emphasizing these types of opportunities will strengthen receivers’ instrumentality and valence beliefs, signaling that expanding their roles will enable them to obtain the extrinsic self-focused benefits that they value. For example, an employee attempted to persuade executives to expand their roles in supporting the environment by appealing to extrinsic

self-focused values: "I showed upper-level management why the program would be in their best interest [...] I emphasized that it made good business sense in that it would bring us dollars" (Andersson & Bateman, 2000, p. 560). As another example, consider the case of a sender seeking help from an accounting colleague in generating financial data (Snell & Wong, 2007). The colleague avoided expanding his role, delaying his response to the sender's request by several days. Over time, the sender learned that the colleague expected to gain recognition and status from the expanded role. By emphasizing that the colleague's work would be visible to the managing director of the company, the sender succeeded in presenting the request in a way that matched the colleague's expectations, and the colleague agreed to expand the role on multiple occasions. As the sender explains: "If I told him that the managing director needed the data, he would give it to me within the hour" (Snell & Wong, 2007, p. 897). Thus, when receivers hold extrinsic self-focused values, a sender's presentation is most likely to motivate role expansion when it emphasizes personal instrumentalities, drawing on principles of incentive compensation and pay-for-performance (Rynes, Gerhart, & Parks, 2005), rewards and punishment (Staw, 1977), and status and impression management (Bolino, 1999).

Proposition 7a. When receivers hold extrinsic self-focused values, they are most likely to accept a role-expansion request when a sender's presentation emphasizes personal instrumentalities.

Receivers with extrinsic other-focused values tend to focus on fulfilling obligations and adhering to norms of reciprocity. For these receivers, effective presentations from senders will emphasize personal obligations such as social debts to be repaid, duties specified in job descriptions, and past commitments (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). Emphasizing obligations through these means will strengthen

receivers' instrumentality and valence beliefs, signaling that expanding their roles will enable them to obtain the extrinsic other-focused benefits that they value. For instance, consider the example of hospital social workers being asked by physicians to expand their roles to incorporate following medical criteria for discharging patients (Meyerson, 1994). A social worker expected these requests to provide extrinsic other-focused reasons, and agreed to expand the role after the sender's request highlighted that it fulfilled an obligation and opened the door for reciprocity:

Sure, I have to sometimes do stuff that I don't agree with and sometimes I think the doctor is totally off base, but that's part of life. Give and take. I find if I do what they ask of me, I can occasionally get them to do what I want for a patient. It's the only way to get anything done around here. (Meyerson, 1994, p. 641)

Thus, when receivers hold extrinsic other-focused values, a sender's presentation is most likely to motivate role expansion when it emphasizes personal obligations, drawing on principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), reciprocity (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Gouldner, 1960), procedural justice and fair treatment (Tepper et al., 2001), and relational forms of psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995).

Proposition 7b. When receivers hold extrinsic other-focused values, they are most likely to accept a role expansion request when a sender's presentation emphasizes personal obligations.

Receivers with intrinsic other-focused values tend to focus on helping and contributing to others. For these receivers, effective presentations from senders will emphasize prosocial impact, such as by highlighting the needs and distress of others, the potential for helping and doing good, and opportunities to make a

difference (Clary et al., 1998; Grant, 2007). For example, a manager sought to convince executives to expand their roles in corporate volunteering by emphasizing intrinsic other-focused benefits: "We are rallying for high school tutors in Math, English and Science. Your contribution, effort and time will be well appreciated by the students whom you help to get better grades and their families. You will see the reward on the faces of the students after they pass the SAT" (Sonenshein, 2006, p. 1161). Emphasizing prosocial impact through these means will strengthen receivers' instrumentality and valence beliefs, signaling that expanding their roles will enable them to achieve the intrinsic other-focused benefits that they value. Thus, when receivers hold intrinsic other-focused values, a sender's presentation is most likely to motivate role expansion when it emphasizes prosocial impact, drawing on principles of task significance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), prosocial motivation (Grant, 2007), moral and ideological causes (Shamir, 1990; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003), other-orientation (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004), and transformational visions and missions that transcend the self (De Cremer, 2002; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Podolny, Khurana, & Hill-Popper, 2005).

Proposition 7c. When receivers hold intrinsic other-focused values, they are most likely to accept a role-expansion request when a sender's presentation emphasizes prosocial impact.

Finally, receivers with intrinsic self-focused values tend to focus on internal rewards. For example, an engineer explained the decision to take on an expanded role in assisting coworkers because it was consistent with intrinsic self-focused values, "Helping colleagues in need opens up more opportunities to learn and develop my own skills" (Perlow & Weeks, 2002, p. 353). For receivers with intrinsic self-focused values, effective presentations from senders will emphasize autonomy to

choose enjoyable tasks and pursue learning opportunities (Clary et al., 1998). This will strengthen receivers' instrumentality and valence beliefs, signaling that expanding their roles will enable them to achieve the intrinsic self-focused benefits that they expect. This proposition is consistent with three decades of research on self-determination theory, which reveals that when given autonomy, employees naturally gravitate toward opportunities that they find intrinsically satisfying in terms of providing enjoyment and learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, an Amway representative was observed attempting to persuade employees to expand their distributor roles by highlighting the freedom that such role expansion afforded: "The best part, really, absolutely, without hesitation is doing what you want to do every day. How many of you can get excited about that concept? Eat breakfast with your children. Have lunch when you're hungry. Take a nap in the middle of the day. Do whatever you want to do" (Pratt, 2000, p. 465). Thus, when receivers expect intrinsic self-focused reasons, a sender's presentation is most likely to motivate role expansion when it emphasizes autonomy, drawing on principles of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995), and job enrichment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Morgeson et al., 2006; Parker, 1998; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006; Wall, Kemp, Jackson, & Clegg, 1986).

Proposition 7d. When receivers hold intrinsic self-focused values, they are most likely to accept a role expansion request when a sender's presentation emphasizes autonomy.

Discussion

These propositions shed initial light on the interpersonal influence processes that commonly underlie role-expansion decisions. Our arguments provide both a descriptive analysis of how senders tend to approach their role-expansion requests and a prescriptive analysis of how

senders can match these requests more effectively to receivers' values. These ideas have meaningful theoretical implications for the literature on role expansion, proactivity and citizenship, and dyadic influence in organizations.

Theoretical implications

Our arguments highlight that employees' decisions to expand their roles are shaped in important ways by interpersonal influence processes. Previous research has shown how broad individual, situational, and social factors predict employees' tendencies to define their roles more broadly (e.g., Hofmann et al., 2003; Kamdar et al., 2006; Morrison, 1994; Parker et al., 1997, 2006; Tepper et al., 2001). However, little research has explained how single interactions shape particular role-expansion episodes. By taking an episodic view, our approach begins to illuminate how single persuasion episodes are important building blocks of expanded roles. This portrays the role-expansion process as a more dynamic, variable, and inherently social phenomenon than prior scholarship has recognized.

Our perspective challenges the widespread assumption that role expansion is a proactive process. Scholars have often argued that employees make self-starting, anticipatory decisions to expand their roles, taking initiative to adopt broader responsibilities (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker et al., 1997, 2006; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In contrast, our approach recognizes that role expansion is often a reactive process, whereby employees take on broader roles in direct response to requests from others. This insight has two important implications for future research on role expansion. First, instead of assuming that role expansion is always undertaken proactively, researchers should more carefully distinguish between role-expansion episodes that are initiated by the focal employee versus by others. Second, role sending is a topic ripe for future proactivity research: the act of making a request for another person to expand a role often involves

anticipating future needs, learning about the receiver's values through history, observation, and third-party information, planning persuasion appeals, and taking initiative to deliver these appeals.

For the literature on dyadic influence, our ideas suggest a path for resolving conflicting findings. Some studies indicate that rational influence tactics are quite effective, while other studies do not (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). We suggest that these conflicting findings can be reconciled by considering the receiver's values. Rational tactics may be successful when the receiver holds extrinsic values and less so when the receiver holds intrinsic values. This raises a more general point: our arguments suggest that distinct theoretical approaches may help to explain role-expansion decisions, depending on the recipient's values. We proposed that for recipients who hold extrinsic self-focused values, economic currency looms largest in the psychological contract, and cost-benefit instrumentality theories are most relevant to explaining role expansion. For recipients who hold extrinsic other-focused values, relational or socioemotional currency may be a more central defining feature of the psychological contract, which suggests that social exchange theories may provide more robust explanations for role expansion. For recipients who hold intrinsic other-focused values, on the other hand, ideological currency may be in principal focus, which suggests that theories of altruism and prosocial motivation may be especially valuable lenses into role expansion. For recipients who hold intrinsic self-focused values, autonomy for expressing these values is particularly important, which suggests that self-determination theory is most pertinent to explaining role expansion.

Future directions

Conceptualizing role expansion as an influence process opens up many new avenues for future conceptual and empirical inquiry. One

promising direction involves exploring how accepting role-expansion requests influences the quality of the relationship between the sender and the receiver: when does it strengthen the tie, and when does it damage the relationship by imposing unwanted obligations? Do receivers accept requests to strengthen a low-quality relationship and to maintain a high-quality relationship? It may be worthwhile to consider how receivers' reactions vary not only as a function of the type or style of appeal delivered, but also its quality and content. For example, inspirational appeals differ in terms of whether they reference values and moral justifications, collective identities, history, worth and efficacy, expectations, and distal versus proximal goals (Shamir et al., 1993; Shamir, Arthur, & House, 1994).

In addition, our propositions focused on broad differences between individuals in motivations and values, but motivations often vary within individuals across different roles and situations. A more complete analysis would examine the complexities involved in motivations that change dynamically across situations. Such changes may exponentially increase the difficulties that senders face in tailoring presentations to match receivers' values, which may resemble a moving target. One way that senders may deal with this complexity is to present appeals more forcefully to strengthen desired values or bring them into clearer focus. For instance, inspirational appeals may strengthen and sharpen receivers' attention to the importance of intrinsic and other-focused values (De Cremer, 2002; Shamir et al., 1993). We hope that future research will examine how role-expansion requests change, not only match or mismatch, the values that receivers associate with a particular role.

Further, individuals often approach roles with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Amabile et al., 1994; Staw, 1977) and both self-focused and other-focused values (De Dreu, 2006; Grant & Mayer, 2009; Shamir, 1990). Multiple motivations mean more reasons

to accept a role, but also higher expectations, which—if unmet—can exacerbate stress and reduce satisfaction, undermining commitment to the role over time (Kiviniemi, Snyder, & Omoto, 2002). It would be useful to learn more about how senders can present role-expansion requests effectively when receivers have mixed values. What is the optimal presentation style when receivers define a role in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits, or in terms of both self-focused and other-focused values, and how can expanded roles be sustained?

In addition, there is reason to believe that employees may initially expand their roles for extrinsic reasons but then craft their roles to provide more intrinsic benefits. Research on the extrinsic incentives bias (Heath, 1999) suggests that senders may use rational appeals too often. At the same time, the presence of a norm of rational self-interest may create a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby receivers come to expect rational appeals as the most legitimate discourse for communicating about role expansion (Ferraro, Pfeffer, & Sutton, 2005; Miller, 1999). Over time, employees may craft expanded roles into alignment with intrinsic values and both self-focused and other-focused concerns (Sheldon, Arndt, & Houser-Marko, 2003). Alternatively, employees may systematically mispredict their own affective reactions (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005), only discovering that they have accepted an unappealing role-expansion request after gaining experience with the expanded role. Such biases may vary as a function of the size of the request: larger requests may encourage employees to think more carefully about role conflict and opportunity costs. At the same time, stronger values and well-tailored appeals may encourage employees to make more rapid, automatic decisions about role expansion, even in the face of large requests.

Another direction involves studying the persistence of and changes in expanded roles over time. Employees may be more likely to maintain their expanded roles when they have

made private and public commitments (Cialdini, 2001) and when they have adopted these roles for intrinsic or internalized reasons, rather than merely complying with extrinsic requests (Kelman, 1958; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When employees comply with a role-expansion request but do not internalize it, they may enact the expected behaviors without psychologically redefining their roles, causing role-expansion decisions and role definitions to diverge. These divergences may have important consequences for employees' identities, and thus for role transitions (Ashforth, 2001; Nicholson, 1984). Time may also play a role in shaping role-expansion decisions. Early in the socialization process, employees are particularly attentive to social cues as they seek to navigate their new environments and develop a favorable reputation (Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 1997; Stewart, 1982; Wanous, 1992). As a result, employees may be particularly open to accepting role-expansion requests when they are newer in their organizational tenure.

Further, we recommend exploration of the dynamics of rejecting role-expansion requests. In many cases, senders are likely to be frustrated and disappointed; how do receivers deliver their rejections in a manner that minimizes these negative reactions and prevents relationship and reputation costs? When does rejection strengthen the receiver's will to resist (Tormala & Petty, 2002), making further rejections more likely, versus deplete self-regulatory resources (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), making further rejections less likely? When are receivers insulted that senders misunderstand their values? We also recommend exploring the influence processes involved in convincing another person to narrow a role. When employees engage in unwanted helping, adopt responsibilities that are irrelevant to organizational goals, become overburdened, or take on roles that directly harm others, how can they be convinced to constrict their roles?

Researchers should also examine how individuals make decisions about expanding

multiple roles and weigh the opportunity costs involved in each expansion decision. Expanding a role requires additional time and energy (Bergeron, 2007; Rothbard, 2001), which can lead to role overload, job stress, and work-family conflict (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). As such, once receivers have decided that the benefits of role expansion match their expectations, they are likely to consider the costs (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Receivers' cost appraisals may thus moderate the effect of presentation-value congruence on role expansion. Furthermore, personality traits may affect both senders' requests and receivers' responses. For example, "blurtious" senders (Swann & Rentfrow, 2001) may spend little time planning requests, while more agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable, and open-minded senders may give more consideration to receivers' values and different ways of appealing to them. For receivers, high agreeableness may involve default tendencies to reply in the affirmative, high conscientiousness may prompt acceptance in order to be responsible and dutiful, and high openness may create receptivity to viewing roles in flexible, malleable terms.

Finally, in examining the flow of influence from senders to receivers, we neglected opportunities to understand how role-expansion decisions are socially constructed through mutual influence processes. For example, senders and receivers may influence each other's understandings of what constitutes part of an existing role definition versus an expanded role. In addition, senders do not only influence receivers' decisions; receivers also respond in ways that affect senders' further arguments, requests, and statements. This suggests that persuasion attempts from senders to receivers may initiate the role-expansion process, but before receivers make their decisions, they often carry out negotiations with senders. This may be especially likely when receivers evaluate the costs of role expansion. Accordingly, we hope future research will develop a more comprehensive view of how the persuasion process unfolds

to shape negotiations about role expansion between senders and receivers (see Malhotra & Bazerman, 2008).

Practical implications and conclusion

Our framework offers practical insights for managers and employees. For role senders, we identified a number of techniques that can be used to tailor role-expansion requests to receivers' values. These techniques include using a rational style when the receiver's values are extrinsic, and an inspirational style when they are intrinsic, and matching different reasons for role expansion to receivers' values rather than one's own. For role receivers, we identified several principles that can be used to strengthen defenses against unwanted role-expansion requests. For example, receivers may anticipate that when they have strong relationship histories with senders, requests may be better tailored and thus require more thorough defenses. In summary, as organizations become increasingly flat and dynamic, the persuasive skills involved in sending role requests, and accepting those that are truly worthwhile while rejecting others with dignity, are likely to become increasingly important.

Acknowledgments

We thank editor Daan van Knippenberg and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful feedback.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Notes

1. It is also possible that relationship history will lead senders to feel more comfortable asking receivers to expand their roles in ways that are inconsistent with their values, perhaps as a favor or to fulfill an obligation from a previous

exchange. However, we still expect that in a more extensive relationship, history provides senders with insights about receivers' values that they can use to frame the request in more value-congruent ways. For example, consider an investment banker asking a colleague with strong self-interested values to volunteer at a charity event. In the absence of relationship history, the banker may frame the request in terms of the opportunity to contribute to a meaningful cause. If relationship history provides clues that the colleague does not value charitable giving, the banker may still make the request, but frame it in a more value-congruent manner as a chance to bolster his reputation as a good citizen.

2. Although it is often assumed that gaining power increases self-focused values and decreases other-focused values, studies have shown that values moderate how individuals react to gains in power. For example, Chen, Lee-Chai, and Bargh (2001) compared individuals with communal-versus exchange-orientations toward relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979, 1993). The former is based on other-focused values—"community oriented individuals are primarily focused on responding to the needs and interests of others" (Chen et al., 2001, p. 175)—while the latter is based on self-focused values, as exchange-oriented individuals are primarily focused on maximizing their own interests. Chen et al. (2001) found that individuals with communal orientations associated power with social-responsibility goals, while individuals with exchange orientations associated power with self-interest goals. This evidence suggests that power can have mixed motivational effects (see also Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006), such that individuals may use power to advance their preexisting values. Thus, it is important to attend to self-focused versus other-focused values separate from power differences.

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