

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

15.280 Communication for Managers  
Fall 2008

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

## Cover Letter and Resume

The Management Communication faculty and the Career Development Office (CDO) conduct collaborative classes on resume and cover letter writing. For this assignment, you will write a cover letter and resume to be turned in to your instructor, as described below. The resume will be turned into the CDO.

### Cover Letter Assignment

Find an advertisement from a publication (CDO listing, newspaper, magazine, trade journal) or the Internet for a position in which you have some interest. (As a last resort, you may write your own ad if you can't find an appropriate one, but it must be realistic.) Write a cover letter applying for that position. Be sure that the assertions you make about yourself are true, backed up by adequate concrete evidence, and clearly linked to attributes required for the job; moreover, make sure that they effectively position and differentiate you as a strong candidate for the position.

Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar are crucial to projecting a credible image of yourself. Some companies have told the CDO that they discard letters with errors, eliminating the applicants. Such errors will also affect your grade for this assignment. You are allowed and encouraged to get help in proofreading your cover letter. Non-native speakers of English are particularly encouraged to seek such help.

The cover letter assignment involves two steps:

- You will learn how to market yourself effectively through cover letters in a collaborative 15.280/CDO class in LEC 10.
- You will submit a final version of your cover letter as a 15.280 homework assignment two days after LEC 11.

You will receive additional instructions concerning the required submission of your resume for CDO feedback. Additionally, the CDO and 15.280 TAs will provide feedback regarding cover letters you plan to submit for internships next Summer.

**Due** Two days after LEC 11

**Grade weight** Homework 5%

### Criteria for grading

**Strategy:** Is the letter appropriate for and targeted to the job and company described? Have you stressed what you can do for the company rather than what the company can do for you? Have you identified key selling points that differentiate and position you as a strong candidate for the job targeted? Does the letter display uniqueness and originality?

**Structure:** Does the introduction provide an overview of the contents of the letter and pique the interests of the reader? Is the arrangement of points effective? Have you

provided concrete evidence to support your selling points? Does your last paragraph outline “next steps” as appropriate?

**Document design, clarity and correctness:** Have you used correct business letter format? Are your key selling points easily accessible to a rapid reader? Are the paragraphs coherent and the sentences concise? Is the letter free from spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes? Is the tone appropriate—confident, polite, and businesslike?