



## 15.398 - Corporations at the Crossroads: The CEO Perspective

### I. Overview:

This is one of the legendary courses at MIT Sloan. In this course we invite as guest lecturers some of the world's leading CEOs from entertainment, information technology, financial services, biotechnology, energy, and other fields.

“**Corporations at the Crossroads: The CEO Perspective**” is designed for students who want to learn about the role of top management. The objective of the course is to have students learn and benefit by interacting with some of the world's leading CEOs. The sessions are highly interactive, with a significant part of the learning coming from the CEO's personal experiences, career advice, personal strategies, and “straight talk.” Speakers focus on three subject areas:

- The job of CEO—what it is all about and what it entails...the CEO's management style, how he organizes his time, how much time he spends with his direct reports, how he decides what to focus on, his interactions with his board, conflict resolution between two direct reports, succession planning, talent identification, compensation issues, and such.
- Career learnings, advice, and counsel to newly graduating MBAs—who does a CEO look up to; what is the best decision the CEO ever made; the worst; if the CEO were a graduating MBA today, the industries he would consider; the worst blunder in his career; how he recovered from that blunder.
- MOST IMPORTANT, the crossroads his company and industry is facing and how he is dealing with that crossroads

Students will

1. Meet real CEOs and learn from their comments and insight
2. Learn about the CEO and his company before class through research and during class by asking questions.
3. Learn from each other through class discussions and assignments

**Long term objective:** Improve your ability to think strategically and act like a CEO.

### III. Class Schedule:

The colors represent the different speaker groups (see Assignments for more details)

DATE	SPEAKER
Feb 6	Jim Mullen President & CEO, Biogen Idec
Feb 13	Rich Karlgaard Publisher, Forbes Magazine
Feb 20	Mark Nunnally Director, Bain Capital Partners
Feb27	Jeffrey Immelt Chairman and CEO, General Electric
March 5	Brad Anderson CEO and Vice Chairman, Best Buy
March 12	Ed Zander CEO, Motorola
April 2	Leon Cooperman Founder and Chairman, Omega Advisors
April 9	Strauss Zelnick Founder and CEO, Zelnick Media
April 16	Raymond Kurzweil Kurzweil Technologies, Inc.
April 23	Gary Kelly CEO and Vice Chairman, Southwest Airlines
April 30	Diane Greene President, CEO and Co-Founder VMware
May 7	Jim Tobin President and CEO, Boston Scientific
May 14	Larry Haverty Associate Portfolio Manager, Gabelli Global Multimedia Trust

#### **IV. Instructors:**

##### **Howard Anderson**

Bill Porter Distinguished Senior Lecturer  
Founder, The Yankee Group  
Founding Partner, Battery Ventures  
E53-307  
617.253.3691  
[handerson@yankeetek.com](mailto:handerson@yankeetek.com)

##### **Bio:**

As founder of the Yankee Group, a leading high-technology market research firm, Howard has been a front row observer of the high tech, computer, and communications world for the past thirty years. He is also a co-founder of Battery Ventures, the highly successful venture capital firm based in Wellesley, MA. He was recently voted one of the top twenty-five people in the communications industry, and his commentary can often be read in such publications as The Wall Street Journal, Forbes Magazine, and various websites.

Howard joined the Sloan faculty in 1999 and is teaching a number of sales, managerial, new ventures, and entrepreneurship courses. He earned his BA degree in economics at the University of Pennsylvania and his MBA at the Harvard Business School.

##### **General Expertise:**

Entrepreneurship/new ventures, venture capital, internet industry, communications industry

##### **Peter Kurzina**

Senior Lecturer  
79 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
617.523.2223  
[kurzina@msn.com](mailto:kurzina@msn.com)

##### **Bio:**

Peter has thirty-three years of experience providing work-out, turn-around, interim, and crisis management to a wide variety of companies. He was President and Chief Operating Officer of Fanny Farmer Candy Shops, Interim President of Vermont Castings Stove Company, President of Westville Homes Corporation, and provided similar leadership roles to a number of other troubled companies in the manufacturing, distributing, textile, men's clothing, and service industries. For fifteen of those years, he was associated with Argus Management Corporation, the Massachusetts based provider of work-out, turn-around, crisis, and interim management to troubled companies. Peter joined the Sloan faculty in 2003 and is teaching 15.966 Managing in Adversity: The CEO Perspective and 15.398 Corporations at the Crossroads: The CEO Perspective.

He earned his BA degree in economics at the University of Pennsylvania, his JD degree at Northwestern University, and his Masters in Management Science in the Sloan Fellows Program at the Sloan School, MIT.

##### **General Expertise:**

Work-out, turn around, crisis, and interim management

## V. Teaching Assistants:

### Carlo Bertucci

917 403 2737  
cbertucc@mit.edu

### Sara Greenbaum

206 399 1293  
sag@mit.edu

## VI. Course Website:

<http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/15/sp08/15.398/>

## VII. The Class Format:

- The class will meet from 6:00 to 8:00pm Wednesdays in E51-345. (Students attending the CEO dinner will meet at the Faculty Club at 4:45 PM. See **Dinner with the CEO** paragraph below.)
- There is no regularly scheduled recitation.
- Some information on the speakers will be uploaded on Sloanspace. Students are expected to research more than the information provided and ask intuitive and interesting questions to the speaker. Extra credits will be given for asking insightful questions.
- Please bring your name cards to the class.
- Turn your cell phones "off" and refrain from using your laptops. Maintain Sloan Professional Standards.
- On the first day for the class each student has to hand-in two face cards to the TA. (A face card is one that has your picture and your name beneath it.). Students may upload their face cards on Sloanspace too.
- For each speaker, a speaker survey will be uploaded on Sloanspace the same day and 10% grades will be awarded for regularly completing the same **before midnight the next day**. For example, the speaker survey for Feb 6, 2008 has to be submitted at or before 11.59 PM on Feb 7, 2008.
- There will be no mid-term or final exam.

## VIII. Assignments:

- There will be a total of three (3) homework assignments throughout the term.
- Each student will hand in 3 memos (including the one to be given on the day of dinner with a speaker) which will represent 40% of the course grade.
- The assignments will be a memo to any three speakers of the student's choice, such that there is a **memo to one speaker from each of the three groups** (see speaker groups under class schedule above) to be handed in to the TA in the beginning of that speaker session.
- The length of the memo should be 3 to 4 double spaced (12 point/Times Roman/Arial font) pages.
- The memo should be an analysis of the important issues that the speaker/company is facing or could face and your recommended strategies.
- For instance, the memo could define the situation facing the CEO or his/her company, identify and evaluate the possible solutions, and then pick and defend the best one. One copy of each assignment should be handed-in to the TA at the beginning of the class for which it is due, and a soft copy should be posted to the assigned space in the class folder on Sloanspace prior to the class.
- On academic honesty refer to : <http://web.mit.edu/policies/10.2.html>

## IX. Dinner with the CEO:

- Each registered student gets to have at least one dinner with one of the CEO's. The dinner will be hosted by Peter Kurzina.
- Each student will get to go to one CEO dinner. Each student will get to select the three speakers he/she would most like to have dinner with. We will attempt to honor those choices.
- **Students are expected to wear business attire.**
- Each student having dinner with the speaker should upload his memo on Sloanspace before 12 noon the day of the dinner and also hand-in a memo (for that speaker) to the TA before the class begins.
- Students are expected to prepare insightful questions, engage in a professional discussion, and most importantly be on time.
- Students should arrive at the MIT Faculty Club by 4.45 PM. The dinner will begin at 5 PM sharp and end at 5:50 PM, at which time the speaker and the dinner group will go to the classroom.
- For the first speaker on Feb 6, 2008 there will be limited time to prepare and grace time and credits will be given for people who opt for that dinner.
- 10% of your grade will be for active and collaborative participation in the dinner conversation with the CEO.

## X. Grading:

- 40% Class participation<sup>1</sup> consists of:
- Attendance, including arriving on time and staying until the end of the session
  - Questions for speakers
  - Response to Cold Calling
  - Submitting face cards on or before the Feb 13, 2008
  - Carrying your Name Cards in the class
- 40% Three Memo Assignments on strategies for the speakers of your choice
- 10% Active Dinner discussion and collaborative participation
- 10% Completion of your speaker surveys by midnight of the day following the class

## XI. Logistics

**Time:** Wednesdays, 6pm to 8pm, Spring 2008

**Place:** E51-345

**Capacity:** 128