

I am entitled to operate my business free of all government regulations other than those written or approved by my industry.

I am entitled to load companies up with debt in order to pay myself and investors big dividends—and then blame any bankruptcy on over-compensated workers.

I am entitled to contracts, subsidies, tax breaks, loans and even bailouts from government, even as I complain about job-killing government budget deficits.

I am entitled to federal entitlement reform.

I am entitled to take credit for all the jobs I create while ignoring any jobs I destroy.

I am entitled to claim credit for all the profits made during a booming economy while blaming losses or setbacks on adverse market or economic conditions.

I am entitled to deny knowledge or responsibility for any controversial decisions made after my departure from the company, even while profiting from such decisions if they enhance shareholder value.

I am entitled to all the rights and privileges of running an American company, but owe no loyalty to American workers or taxpayers.

I am entitled to confidential information about my employees and customers while refusing even to list the company's phone number on its Web site.

I am entitled to be treated with deference and respect by investors

I mislead, customers I bamboozle, directors I manipulate and employees I view as expendable.

I am entitled to be lionized in the media without answering any questions from reporters.

I am entitled to the VIP entrance.

I am entitled to everything I have and more that I still deserve.

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**C**onsider the source and the audience: Steven Pearlstein is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and a professor of economics. Why did he decide to publish this piece in the *Washington Post* right before the 2012 election?

**L**ay out the argument and the underlying values and assumptions: Pearlstein is making his point by lampooning the entitled attitude of a “job creator.” You have to read between the lines to find his argument. Who does he believe is responsible for the wealth created in society? What social benefits go into supporting that wealth creation? How would he weight the role of the “job creator” against that of the worker?

**U**ncover the evidence: No evidence here—Pearlstein creates a caricature of a wealthy businessman and mocks an exaggerated attitude of entitlement. Does he make his point? Would this convince anyone who didn't already agree with him?

**E**valuate the conclusion: Pearlstein clearly thinks that “job creators” are whiners who feel underappreciated by society for what they do and who have an exaggerated view of their own importance. If he is not going to convert anyone to his side who doesn't already agree with him, what was the point of writing this piece?

**S**ort out the political significance: The not-so-subtle subtext here is that Mitt Romney—who was caught on tape complaining about the “entitled 47 percent” who take no responsibility for their lives and who are not ever going to support his candidacy—reflects a kind of entitled attitude of his own. What does it say about economic policy in the United States if the two parties are so divided that each side views the other as parasitic moochers? Is there any common ground?