

Signaling Cooperation

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Abstract

An applicant's résumé is the most commonly used source to draw inferences about his or her capabilities and preferences prior to the job interview. In this paper, we examine what the résumé signals about one's willingness to cooperate. We collect student subjects' résumés before they play a standard voluntary contribution mechanism. Individuals with intensive social engagement (as rated by an independent third party) contribute about 30-40 percent more in the one-shot VCM than others. Groups composed of individuals with intensive social engagement on the résumé cooperate more successfully in the repeated VCM. When subjects predict behavior in the VCM based on résumé content, intensive social engagement increases average expectations by about 30 percent. No other item (age, gender, field of study) or extracurricular activity on the résumé has such a signaling value with respect to cooperation.

Keywords: Cooperation, Signaling, Résumé

JEL Codes: C9, G2, M5