



Sample Reference for a Director of Program Management Candidate

Reference Obtained from: *[President of an industrial manufacturing company]*

Nature of relationship:

[Reference] established the custom *[Type of]* equipment operation that hired *[Candidate]* in 1988. *[Candidate]* worked with him from 1992 to 1995 as a Sales and Marketing Manager.

Compared to other people you have worked with who have been in a similar capacity, how would you rate *[Candidate]*'s performance overall?

"There are some people you work with that you will remember for the rest of your life, and he is one of them. *[Candidate]* and I landed the largest contract with the military in our company's history, to equip a fleet of floating warehouses. He managed several marketing efforts, put together programs and sales materials, and presented new concepts to customers. He worked well with our three-tiered sales system. In addition, he wrote excellent technical papers for us that were presented at trade shows, where the people attending were technical experts, and he could field their questions and hold his own with them. Overall, I can't remember a more well-rounded Sales and Marketing Manager."

Are there other special skills or talents stand out in your mind?

"What I remember most about *[Candidate]* is his ability to go in and explain the cost/benefit side to customers. He has a way of making complex concepts sound simple. In addition, he has a pleasant way of being strong, but not pushy. He has a unique combination of technical and sales skills. For example, his strong, hands-on technical skills would allow him take a product apart and show a customer how to maintain it, while his sales skills were what ultimately sold the product."

This job calls for an individual with an understanding of thermal issues from a mechanical engineering perspective. How do you feel about his ability in this area?

"I'm glad that the position is related to temperature, humidity and test. That's fantastic. He understands the technical aspects of that very well. He spent a fair amount of time with our Research and Development Director, and I know he wanted to find out the details of how things worked on our systems. He is very interested in product development. That should be right up his alley."

In what areas did *[Candidate]* have shortcomings or need improvement?

"He's very serious. He strongly believes in what he does, which makes him seem too intense to some people. He might not make friends with everyone that way, but his approach is good for the job he has to do, and I feel that he adapts properly to what a given situation demands."

Would you rehire him?

"Yes. I was disappointed to see him go."

This position requires a leader with strong technical capabilities and sound business sense, who can create and manage a structured approach to program management. How do you feel about his ability to do this?

"As I said, his technical knowledge was a definite asset, especially his understanding of systems integration and complex mechanical products. In terms of business sense, he is a thorough planner and is particularly good at anticipating and identifying customer issues. His experience in both marketing and engineering would definitely add to his program management ability."

What have I not asked you that you would like to add?

"I know he will do very well wherever he goes. He's a pleasure to work with. He is serious when he needs to be, but can relax and be fun too. He adapts to different customers around the world, and fit in well in all the different environments we exposed him to."