

Sample Reference for a Systems Engineering Director Candidate

Reference Obtained from: *[Human Resources Manager for a leading commercial aircraft company]*

Nature of relationship:

[Reference] is the Human Resources Manager at *[Company]*'s commercial aircraft division. He is in charge of all human resources activity for engineering and has been working with *[Candidate]* for the past two years. *[Candidate]*'s position was *[Type of]* Team Leader for the 747 program. *[Reference]* worked closely with *[Candidate]* and oversaw most of his work relations during this program.

Compared to other people you have worked with who have been in a similar capacity, how would you rate his performance overall?

"Compared to others, *[Candidate]* always sees to it that all tasks are accomplished and all goals are achieved. He makes quick and precise decisions. In management meetings, he always comes in very prepared, and he is very analytical. In terms of overall performance, I would rate him high in his management of technical issues, engineering performance issues, business issues, fleet issues, and personnel issues."

What special skills or talents stand out in your mind?

"In terms of people skills, you always know where you stand with him because he is very clear and straight-forward. He considers all the angles and gets feedback before he makes a decision. He is not afraid to challenge people, and yet he can admit when he's wrong. As far as technical skills, he has worked in several engineering positions, so when technical issues come up he seems to be well-informed and knows exactly what is going on. He has more technical depth than most of the other management team."

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

"He likes to be completely informed. When this doesn't happen, he can get frustrated. For example, when *[Candidate]* isn't being informed of all the details by upper management, he does not feel like he is able to give all his input and skills into a project. He really prefers to feel and know that he's doing the best that he possibly can."

How would you characterize his management style?

"He is very participative, not authoritative. He frequently holds brief meetings to make sure that he is communicating with his people. For each assignment, he pulls together independent groups and manager into a cohesive team, and they get the job done with a common vision. He develops his people with training programs, management development, performance review meetings, and one-on-one participation."

This position requires a high level of engineering leadership and performance in order to bring focus to the systems group. How do you feel about his ability to do that?

"I know he would do very well because I have seen him work with a team of people and give them the training that they require to excel. His team building ability is very strong. For example, he

created a skills analysis matrix to assess his team's strengths and weaknesses. In knowing the technical capabilities of his group, he was able to target exactly how to improve their level of talent through skills training and cross training. Even with the recent cut-backs and lay-offs, he has made sure that all of the skills management programs are maintained."

One of the primary objectives of this position is to improve the accuracy of performance reviews. How do you think he would perform in this area?

"I've worked with him in this area and find him to be quite capable. He is determined to set forth clear and measurable performance goals for his team. In fact, he has consulted me several times for my input as to whether these performance goals align with corporate and organizational goals. Overall, I have found his performance review process to be accurate and successful in ensuring strong performance from his team."

Would you want to work with him again?

"Definitely. I think he would be an asset to any company. Our company has really appreciated what he accomplished for our systems engineering group, and he's very highly thought of here."

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

"I'd like to stress that his employees really enjoy working for him. I receive very few discipline problems from his employees compared to others."