SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION 1

1) Please comment on the context of your interaction with the applicant. If applicable, briefly describe the applicant’s role in your organization. (250 words)

I first met Sanjay in late 2007, when he joined Universal Business Group as an Analyst. Since then, his responsibilities have increased in proportion with his growing role at the company. He has promoted to Senior Analyst in 2009 and we have worked together extensively on various projects throughout his tenure here. I have happily recommended him for a recent promotion into a Manager position reporting directly to me.

Early on as a new hire, I identified Sanjay’s ability to combine analytical skills with an intuitive sense of client needs, and frequently chose him to lead projects within my group focused on identifying both new markets and unexplored matches between company products and client desires. In this capacity, Sanjay frequently worked with me both internally, to generate both creative ideas and useful analytics, and externally, in a direct client facing role supporting some of our most complicated business-to-business negotiations.

Sanjay is a smart, cheerful presence and natural leader in the office, and I have found that it is relationship building that is his core strength. Over the last several years I have gotten to know Sanjay well personally, but also professionally, to the point where I feel absolute confidence tasking him with developing and leading key presentations to important clients.

2) Please describe the most important piece of constructive feedback you have given the applicant. Please detail the circumstances and the applicant’s response. (250 words)

One of Sanjay’s positive qualities is his ability to absorb constructive criticism and make immediate changes to implement it. He also actively seeks out feedback, indicative of his desire to continually improve his performance in all areas. During a recent client meeting, I asked Sanjay to lead the presentation on a new product we wanted to partner with the client on.

Sanjay was not as prepared as he normally is, and stumbled a bit on the subsequent client questions that delved into some of our cost structure. I was able to step in and provide an answer that satisfied their concerns. Later Sanjay asked me how he could have more effectively deflected the question. I was impressed that Sanjay wanted to handle more of the communication himself, and I think it reflects on his proactive desire to handle the client relationship effectively.

I suggested that thorough preparation and brainstorming about possible client questions would be a useful tool before any presentation. I also offered to discuss some of the “difficult” client questions ahead of time and make sure Sanjay knew how to deflect attention from specific inquiries about costs and other key negotiation points. As a result of this feedback, Sanjay proactively set up pre-meetings with myself and the head of marketing to cover all possible client questions before any presentation. Since then he has exceeded my expectations in handling customer facing communication smoothly.

3) Please provide an example of a time when the applicant was particularly successful at interacting with others in a team (employees, peers, managers, etc.); how was the applicant successful? How does the applicant compare to his/her peers in this dimension?

Sanjay has an ability I find rare in smart young analysts, and that is the ability to identify conclusions he sees as self-evident, and explain his own reasoning in a measured way to generate discussion with peers or superiors. In a recent event, an opportunity for Universal Business Group was under discussion. Sanjay realized in a group discussion that this opportunity could present a conflict of interest for the company, and while he instinctively took a veto position against the potential action, it was Sanjay in particular who recommended stepping back from the current meeting and conducting additional research and analysis to get a better grasp of the potential situation.

I selected Sanjay to lead this “task force” subgroup and asked him to present the results at a meeting shortly after. I was extremely pleased with the results, as in his report Sanjay presented a detailed, logical and convincing report on the opportunity. This report was bolstered by several supporting points generated by analysts working under Sanjay’s direction as part of the task force. I am convinced that it was Sanjay’s leadership, perception and straightforward conviction in this instance that uncovered a potential conflict and demonstrated his ability to lead a team under high-pressure circumstances.

4) How has the applicant’s career progressed over the time that you have known him/her? How does this growth compare to his/her peer group? Please describe the peer group that you are comparing this applicant.

Sanjay has traced a rapid ascent through Universal Business Group. He began at a Junior Analyst position and impressed literally from day one, where his direct supervisor at the time observed him already helping fellow members of his training group during breaks by discussing and more clearly explaining material that was covered rapidly in the training. In light of Sanjay’s combination of interpersonal and analytical skills, we sought to provide him as much client-facing experience as possible, and assigned him client contacts normally entrusted to more senior personnel.

While Sanjay joined UBG with six other analysts who have all performed admirably during difficult economic times, Sanjay is the only analyst to be promoted to manager at this date. Sanjay has raced ahead of his cohort in terms of mastery of a complex business, ability to communicate effectively with both coworkers and clients, and intangible leadership qualities. He has been entrusted with more responsibility both directly and through several rapid promotions.

5) Provide any additional comments you think would assist the Admissions Committee in making its decision.

I have also gotten to know Sanjay personally over the last several years. My impression of him outside the workplace has only reinforced my impression of his potential in it: he is curious, driven and social. This is often expressed in his hobbies, which he pursues with an infectious enthusiasm. He recently took up the cello again after having not played since childhood, and within weeks was organizing a casual weekend “orchestra” out of various lapsed musicians at UBG. While we have a demanding workplace, he still finds time to volunteer for several charities and has regularly organized successful donation drives for various causes. It is clear to me that Sanjay will bring a sharp mind, leading spirit and undeniable drive to his schooling and beyond.