SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION 2

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

Henry joined Enviro-Energy International Inc. a little over three years ago. At the time, new associates of Enviro-Energy were expected to work with their managers for several years to learn the complex emerging market for renewable energy technologies before moving into positions with direct reports and geographic market responsibilities. I had already gotten to know Henry’s work through his analysis of market opportunities in wind power in our most important new markets in China and South Korea when EEII acquired a smaller firm. Though Henry was a newer employee, I trusted his track record thus far and put him in charge of a small team absorbed from the smaller company.

This team was tasked with expanding EEII’s market for wind power products in particular in the China and South Korea regions. Since this team was integrating multiple new hires from the outside firm, mixing different levels of experience and expertise, I was directly involved to make sure they were provided with the information and support needed. In addition, though Henry was still a recent addition, putting him in charge of this team was a de facto promotion that meant he would be reporting to me directly.

Over the next two years, I had a front-row seat to watch Henry develop his team, his market and his leadership skills simultaneously. He was directly responsible for guiding a successful team that identified new opportunities in a complex market, and found appropriate roles for a quickly assembled group of new hires with diverse skill sets. I was happy to make his de facto promotion official less than a year into his new role, and he has retained over 90 of his original team members while more than doubling EEII’s market share in these important new territories. It has been a pleasure to have Henry leading a group for me both because of his tangible results and the intangible energy of his team.

2. How does the candidate’s performance compare to those of other well-qualified individuals in similar roles?

Henry stepped into a role two years ago that is, on average, filled by an Enviro-Energy employee with three to five years of experience with the company. I find that even for very bright, well-educated individuals, it takes several years of work to fully grasp this rapidly changing industry, and to achieve a level of comfort that then allows for innovation and leadership. Henry’s ability to produce clear analysis backed up by logical explanations and arguments was apparent right from his start here, and I would normally have placed him on a fast track to the next role consistent with the highest performers in a recruitment class.

However, with the acquisition of a smaller firm I chose to take what would normally be considered a risk and moved Henry well ahead of schedule. In that role, he outperformed his peers, nearly all with far more experience at EEII, in virtually every way. In yearly evaluations with his direct reports, Henry received the highest ratings and most positive feedback I can recall.

3. Please describe the most important piece of constructive feedback you have given the applicant. Please detail the circumstances and the applicant’s response.

Our acquisition required us to travel extensively through China and South Korea from our home base in San Jose. These trips often required Henry’s team to hit the ground running after a long flight, frequently jumping into detailed presentations at meetings starting only an hour or two after landing. At one point, our flight was delayed a few hours, and a sluggish and jetlagged team had to move straight into a presentation- I noticed because I was certainly not immune!

On the way back I pointed out this issue to Henry. There was no way to avoid these type of tight schedules given our client’s obligations, but I suggested he work out with his team ways to come in as fresh as possible on our trips. Once I had pointed out to Henry that something everyone considered a simple fact-of-life could be analyzed like any business issue, he set up several freestyle brainstorming sessions with his team.

Several creative solutions came out of these sessions, including sleeping in shifts and running a mock presentation an hour or so before landing, but the more important outcome was that Henry immediately grasped that he could take the same creative and analytical approach he uses normally to address any issue, whether directly related to our business or not.

4. Please make additional statements about the applicant’s performance, potential, or personal qualities you believe would be helpful to the MBA Admissions Office.

Henry’s position with Enviro-Energy calls for him to use his sharp analytical skills on a daily basis in a fast-paced, demanding work environment, and his position as a team leader means his interpersonal and leadership skills are tested on a daily basis. However, even on a team with a well-defined goal I have seen

Henry’s creativity shine through, as he is constantly searching for ways for EEII to improve and tackle new challenges. It’s even easier to see this side of Henry outside of the workplace- part of his ability to get his team through a tough transition is expressed by his constant positivity and energy. It’s not every team leader who will organize a weekly kickball league and get 100 attendance from his department, or will harness his hobbyist interest in programming to create an iPhone game from scratch over a weekend for a coworker’s child’s birthday. Henry is that team leader, and I feel his combination of these qualities will lead him to success at Stanford.