

Recommendation Form for

John

Smith

RECOMMENDER:First Name Maxwell Last Name Roper

Middle Name _____ Prefix _____ Suffix _____

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:Company Name USA Leadership CorpsPosition/Title FounderIndustry Management Consulting**QUESTIONS**

1. What is your relationship to, and how long have you known the applicant? Is this person still employed by your organization? If not, when did he/she depart?

I have known John for approximately ten months. He was a volunteer consultant for our organization, USA Leadership Corps. We are a national volunteer-based strategy consulting group that caters to the needs of non-profits and small businesses. Our volunteer consultants are emerging business professionals between 5 and 10 years of work experience who are in the process of earning their MBAs.

I am the Corps' founder and I work closely with the selection and training of all our volunteer consultants, including John. We matched John with a breast cancer support foundation located in Oakland, California. His objective was to help its director develop a new business plan and structure for the organization. The client was struggling because of the following reasons: limited board commitment, disengaged donors and supporters, limited connections with the corporate community, and business data mismanagement.

As John's Project Coach, I supervised his progress toward completing the project. We spoke numerous times during his 6-month project about his approach and challenges.

2. Please provide a short list of adjectives describing the applicant's strengths.

John worked intimately with his two clients to document three-year strategic goals for their businesses. He then documented and analyzed his clients' revenue sources, target market for growth, and detailed plans to approach the target audiences.

John excelled (compared to his peers) because he demonstrated superior active listening ability, diligence, and overall organization.

Active Listener:

A major requirement for leading a successful Corps consulting engagement is the ability to listen to the client, ask probing questions, and document the resulting information clearly. John excelled in this capacity.

John's client originally had vague and ambiguous goals for her businesses. Thus, John had to do listen intensely in order to leverage his client's knowledge and perspective. Ultimately he developed a detailed action plan containing feasible growth opportunities because he was able to extract the essential client data.

Further, not only did John engage his client to arrive at a satisfactory project result, he also engaged me and my knowledge base. He asked critical questions of me so that he could best accomplish key client meeting and project objectives.

Extremely Dedicated:

Our consultants usually dedicate three hours per week over the course of three months toward completing their projects. John far exceeded this requirement by remaining with his client for six months. Further, he often worked with his client for twice the weekly hour expectation. John still keeps in touch with his client and participates in many key business decisions.

Organized & Disciplined:

John exhibited great discipline when preparing his many project documents. These materials included meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and spreadsheets. His materials were always very thorough, and he was extremely prepared when we had project status phone meetings.

3. Please compare the applicant's performance to that of his peers. Does the applicant have the potential to become a senior manager?

Of the 200 volunteer consultants that I have worked with since founding USA Leadership Corps, John was one of our top performers (Top 10%). I have illustrated his great strengths in multiple sections of this letter.

As for John's future success as a senior manager, I believe the following skills are most important in that role: planning and organizational skills, solid analytical skills, and the ability to inspire others.

a. Please refer to question #2 regarding John's planning and organizational skills.

b. As for John's analytical ability, the below story illustrates his talent.

John's client was contemplating organization a fundraising event to generate additional revenue for her organization. John completed a detailed MS Excel analysis and estimation of the financial success of the initiative. It was a fantastic tool that was well received by his client.

c. Lastly, the below story is a good example of John's ability to inspire:

One of John's clients, who lacked a solid business mindset, had little experience in strategic planning to drive her small business. However, with many years of experience, the client was definitely an expert in her field of reading instruction.

The client had an ambitious mission for her organization but was having difficulty achieving this mission. John realized that, with his consulting expertise, he could help the client achieve her mission by leveraging her expert knowledge in the field and about her business. With this realization, he started the project with the intent of getting her engaged and keeping her committed to the success of the project.

From the beginning, John inspired the client by educating her on the value of defining goals for her organization and thinking strategically. With this, the client understood that if she defined goals with a strategic mindset, she could achieve her mission quicker. Based on John's insight, the client became excited about the project and continued to be engaged.

4. How effective are the applicant's interpersonal skills in working with peers, supervisors and subordinates?

John's main objective was to help his client identify new ways to significantly increase annual revenue. To achieve success, John had to analyze his client's business model and determine an appropriate and tailored strategy. Ultimately, he developed a well-defined plan that his client could implement immediately in a tough economic environment.

The final result of John's analysis was the creation of a detailed corporate donor program that targeted specific industries and companies. A valuable byproduct of John's analysis was new techniques his client could leverage via its existing media exposure, website, and other proprietary resources.

5. How does the applicant accept constructive criticism?

Our consulting engagements are guided by a structured approach using leadership concepts inspired by leading business school curriculums. We outline a detailed methodology that requires consultants like John to assess and document the clients' goals and challenges.

John initially resisted our disciplined approach. He was confident that he had already understood his client's problems within the first week of the project, and wanted to begin solution implementation right away.

I reinforced to him the value of our methodical consulting approach, and why it was necessary for his project's success. As a result of this feedback, John soon embraced our process and recognized its value. Within a few weeks, John uncovered several additional issues that he was later able to resolve.

John resisted our approach initially because he had been successful in his career without having to apply such methods. It did not take long, however, for him to accept our concepts and incorporate them into his approach. I am convinced that an MBA will further deepen his understanding of such concepts and increase his value to future employers or consulting clients.

6. Comment on your observations of the applicant's ethical behavior.

John was very straightforward and transparent during all of his project engagements. This made it extremely easy for me for me to manage his progress. Specifically, John never missed a deadline and was always very proactive at scheduling client meetings and communicating his plan for next steps.

7. What do you think motivates the candidate's application to Columbia Business School?

I believe that John is motivated to pursue an MBA at this point in his career because he very much enjoys learning about, discussing, and implementing cutting-edge management, organizational, and entrepreneurial strategies. He and I have corresponded on numerous occasions regarding strategies that his USALC clients could be implementing to achieve their goals. During all of those conversations I have had with John, his passion for such topics was very obvious.

8. In what ways could the applicant improve professionally? If you could change one thing about the applicant, what would it be?

I would urge John to continue to develop his financial modeling and analysis skills. A key component of one of his consulting projects was developing a 5-year financial model for his client's business.

John did a great job of creating the structure for a MS Excel planning tool. However, I needed to provide additional detail and cost contingencies to his tool. With more exposure to financial modeling via a competitive business school curriculum, I am confident that John will master this important management planning skill.

9. Are there any other matters which you feel we should know about the applicant?

John is a very talented young leader who brought tremendous commitment, integrity, and intellect to our program. These attributes not only enabled him to be very successful in our program, but also made working with him a very pleasurable experience.

I hope the examples I have provided in this letter have illustrated John's great talents and character. I expect John to accomplish many great things in his career: both in the corporate world and in his community. An MBA from your school will only elevate his great potential.

RANKINGS

QUALITY ASSESSED

	Poor (Bottom Third)	Average (Middle Third)	Good (Top Third)	Very Good (Top 20%)	Outstanding (Top 10%)	Truly Exceptional (Top 2%)
Intellectual Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quantitative Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analytical Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poise/Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Personal Integrity / Ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal Skills / Ability to Work with Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sense of Humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal English Communication Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written English Communication Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Future Managerial or Business Success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Impression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>