

To Whom It May Concern:

As Director of Magazine Distribution at Anderson News Company until February 2009, Art Foster was an invaluable asset to the organization. He was the primary architect of the company's assortment system. He managed associates in a professional manner. He re-engineered his department and saving the company millions in costs.

Art Foster designed and implemented a product assortment system that utilized store-specific demographics and the newest category management concepts (consumer decision tree, brand substitutability, comparison to All Commodity Volume). As the passionate champion of this system, he taught others how to use it and demonstrated its impressive capabilities to both retail customers and suppliers. As business needs changed, Art Foster readily adapted the system to meet those changes.

Art managed his group of category managers and clerical staff in a professional, compassionate manner. He was a true mentor who cared about employees and developed the talents of associates in his group. Art has excellent organizational skills. He insured processes and procedures were well-documented (including creating interactive training modules). As a direct report, Art Foster was an excellent sounding board who could be counted on for unbiased, well-reasoned insight.

Art radically re-engineered the distribution group by first centralizing activities saving the company over \$1.4 million annually and then shifting the team's focus from distribution to category management. The category management concept merged distribution, analysis, and supplier relations into a single retail-chain centric position which focused on improving key business metrics that were reviewed weekly in formal meetings with marketing managers. This new structure not only saved the company an additional \$500 thousand annually, it was also more action-oriented by directing efforts to value-added activities. Art's implementation of more sophisticated distribution algorithms utilizing probability statistics, sellout metrics, and store-specific rack data saved the company \$10 million in annual distribution costs by reducing unsolds and increasing sell-through from 36 to 41%.

Art possesses the unique abilities of excellent strategic planning and flawless, tactical execution. He solves real-world challenges with practical solutions that utilize state of the art concepts. He was an excellent, loyal executive at Anderson News. Given the opportunity, I would hire Art without hesitation.

Sincerely,

Patrick Bowman

Former Vice President of Category Management at Anderson News Company

Present Category Director of Books and Magazines

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