June 2, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Chief Information Officer for OfficeMax in Cleveland, Ohio, I was responsible for all aspects of the IT organization within the company. The largest project, the highest profile and most important project at that time was the implementation of the various SAP modules, and the migration from other packages and legacy systems.

At the time of this project, the SAP Retail system was in its infancy in terms of functionality and stability. After several delays in the project, problems with functionality, business engagement and other typical ERP challenges, we found that we were considerably over budget and well over our projected 'go live' date. As retail was new (in the US) to SAP at the time, several senior SAP executives from Germany visited our company to review the project. At that time, SAP suggested that we engage Gary Palmer as Program Manager, and have him report directly to me and provide direct updates to the Executive Committee and the SAP Steering Committee.

Gary revised the project plans, as well as the expectations of the executives, achieved a much higher level of engagement from the executives, relative to the SAP Project, and got the project team motivated to believe that we could get back on track. Within a fairly short time, the project was back on track and close to the original budget. The business leadership, with Gary's regular updates, began to get more comfortable with the project and became much more engaged (as they should have been from the beginning).

After Gary assumed programme management responsibility, we went live fairly shortly after the original plan called for us to do so. More importantly, testing and quality were done in such a way that we had no catastrophic issues, mostly typical post go live issues that were quickly resolved.

Finally, the importance of the project cannot be understated because OfficeMax was in the process of a $300 million supply chain project, for which SAP was to be critical. If we had not gone live close to schedule with SAP, it would have delayed the entire migration of direct store delivery of 1,1000 store to distribution centres, resulting in tens of millions of dollars of cost.

I attribute a great deal of the success of that project to Gary and his programme management skills. I would strongly recommend Gary for virtually any senior level IT or very large scale programme management role.

Please feel free to contact me directly if I can provide any more input on Gary Palmer.

Regards,

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