



Letter of Recommendation

July 11, 2007

Dean Dirks is one of the hardest working and most diligent and committed individuals with whom I have ever worked.

I hired Dean to be West Star's Director of Food Service Operations in 19XX. West Star then operated a number of Taco Bell Express, Winchell's Donut and Subway sandwich facilities and we needed an experienced food service professional to effectively manage and grow these businesses. Dean's past experience managing Marriott's branded food service operations in the Pacific Northwest was the skill set that we sought. Within 120 days Dean had closed three Taco Bell units, significantly reduced labor and food cost percentages and greatly enhanced customer service throughout the food service operation. Six months after I hired Dean I expanded his responsibilities to include managing all labor in the company and a year later promoted him to be the Vice President of Operations for the entire company which included 59 convenience stores and two inter-state truck stops. Dean also played the key role (site selection, facility construction and operations management) in building a chain of eleven stand alone Subway sandwich stores over the following years as we sought to diversify our income streams. With every promotion Dean more than delivered upon my expectations. He continually sought to expand his knowledge of retail best practices. Among Dean's many talents perhaps his most valuable is his ability to build teams and to instill commitment and loyalty throughout an operation.

Without hesitation I highly recommend Dean Dirks for any management position that he seeks. He is a very high quality individual with great character and integrity.

Hank Armour
President/CEO
NACS
The Association for Convenience & Petroleum Retailing