

Chet Rhodes has asked me to write in support of his application for the position of Assistant Director, Network Infrastructure at the University of Maryland at College Park.

I hired Chet shortly after assuming my duties as Executive Director of a newly established Federal agency with a limited life and a complex mission. He joined our small staff as an intermittent employee with the responsibility of designing, installing, and maintaining our computer network. His duties, responsibilities, and importance grew steadily as he took on the task of designing a work flow application for Lotus Notes that organizes our review of records and generates the many reports that our legislation requires. In developing this application, Chet has played a crucial role in many areas of our operation. He is an admired and well respected colleague who makes an extremely important contribution.

Chet, in addition to possessing a fully professional knowledge of the technical aspects of the position that he is seeking, has several critical attributes that are arguably more important.

In my experience, individuals in technical positions (especially those that involve a service component) are often less than generous with their knowledge. In a misguided attempt to make themselves appear irreplaceable, they monopolize useful information and make things appear more complex and unapproachable than they need to be. Such an attitude can have a pernicious effect on an organization. Chet Rhodes is incredibly generous in sharing useful information with people who can benefit from it. He is a superb teacher with an uncanny ability of explaining complex issues clearly and understandably.

Chet has the temperament to hold a high pressure position. He is unflappable, calm, and has the kind of rock-solid common sense that allows him to assess a situation and devise appropriate solutions.

Chet has been a pleasure to supervise. He always presents carefully thought-out options and recommendations, being careful to outline the assumptions upon which they are based. He understands the role that budget considerations play in making technology-related decisions, and although he is excited about the opportunities that information technology offers, he is realistic and practical about its implementation.

My only hesitation in recommending Chet Rhodes is my fear that, in getting the new position, he would have to curtail the already limited time that he can devote to us. I will hold in check my own parochial concerns, however, and give Chet Rhodes an unqualified, enthusiastic, and heartfelt endorsement.