

Benchmark Brands, Inc.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Mr. MARKUS SCHNEIDER joined our company in July of 2003 in the position of CREATIVE DIRECTOR. Benchmark Brands is one of the fastest growing catalog companies in the US, with the monthly healthcare/wellness catalog 'FootSmart' and over 35,000,000 copies printed annually.

Mr. Schneider was in charge of our company's Creative Department, with the staff of Art Director, Art Services Manager, Graphic Designers and Web Designers. In this leading role, Mr. Schneider managed, coached and developed all team members on a daily basis. He was also responsible for identifying, selecting and hiring new employees for the Creative Department, as needed with the rapid growth of our company.

Mr. Schneider was responsible for the design and production of our monthly direct mail catalog 'FootSmart' (64-72 page catalogs with 35,000,000 copies printed annually), while initiating a redesign to the catalog. In this complex role, he guided and directed all designers while setting and maintaining the creative direction and goals of the brand. With the heavy workload of a monthly publication, Mr. Schneider also identified and utilized freelance designers to support the creative staff of print designers, as needed.

With direct responsibility for the print production of the catalog, Mr. Schneider directed and oversaw every step of the creative process: Establishing a critical date calendar with all deadlines and production due dates, calling creative turn-in meetings with the buyers for all new merchandise, directing concept & first layouts for the catalog with priority on cover, back cover and opening spread, preparing photography with selection of locations and photographers, directing photo shoots, overseeing the execution of all changes to layout and product placements, having all catalog spreads routed for proof reading to the different departmental functions, overseeing the complete pre-press production including retouching of photography, ensuring accuracy of colors and merchandise on proofs, executing the on-press check for the new catalog at the printing facilities.

Mr. Schneider also determined the budget and production cost for the catalog with all creative, from freelance copywriters/designers, photographers, models, locations to pre-press production.

In addition to the print catalog, Mr. Schneider directed and oversaw all creative for the company's web site expansion, including all online promotion activities such as banners, pop-ups, and promotional emails. In the process of implementing the online growth, he also identified and utilized different freelance web designers, as needed.

Mr. Schneider was also responsible for additional product publications, such as the Delta Air Lines SkyMall Magazine.

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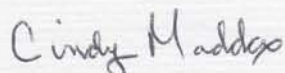
As Creative Director and Department Head of Creative Services, Mr. Schneider's contribution to the growth of our company has been tremendous. His expertise in design and detailed knowledge of the creative process were a lead factor for the success of our catalog operations.

His expert knowledge of the pre-press and production process have always ensured the precise meeting of all deadlines, which represents a tremendous effort in the huge undertaking of producing a monthly catalog.

Mr. Schneider's professional conduct was always exemplary. He was well respected as a leader of his team and known throughout the company as a resourceful and highly professional Manager.

Mr. Schneider always demonstrated exceptional work ethics in our fast-paced and deadline-oriented business, which involved countless evening and weekend hours in order to get our catalog out on time.

His positive attitude and professional expertise of many years have always guaranteed a smooth operation of the Creative Department. We were very sorry to hear of his decision to leave Benchmark Brands but wish Mr. Schneider all the best and continued success in his future endeavors.



Cindy Maddox
Director of HR
05/27/2004