Mr. Byron Michael Smith

502 SW Franklin Dr.

Ankeny, IA 50023

May 17, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with confidence that I recommend my leader, mentor, and friend, Brooke Bartholomay Knight, as a candidate for the 2016 Woman of Influence Award. I have had the pleasure of working with Brooke for the past ten years. During this time, I have worked directly and indirectly for Brooke. I met Brooke on a temporary assignment that I was tasked with to support the launch of new business in Des Moines, Iowa where Brooke was the Site Director leading the startup efforts. Our initial project was to begin sourcing talent to staff 100 seats for the fall annual enrollment. We interviewed over 180 candidates for both permanent and temporary contract positions inclusive of phone staff and leadership roles.

While I worked in our Cherry Hill, New Jersey office and commuted to Des Moines I quickly realized how unique Brooke's leadership was. Brooke is a “big picture” thinker, but she never loses sight of the little details, she utilizes best practices in her work to ensure the success of her work, and moreover of her team. She was quick to develop a plan to continue the development of the Des Moines site. She grew the business to 280 seats and was able to hire many of our contract employees. Brooke developed a leadership program that afforded individuals personal growth. I had the privilege of benefiting from her influence which resulted in my relocation to Iowa full time in 2006. She has taken many people under her leadership to further their growth and development. Whether it’s getting people involved in community service, joining her 6 AM fitness circuit boot camp workouts or helping them create SMART goals, her span of influence is widely impactful.

Brooke is thoughtful and well organized. She easily establishes rapport and fosters a community of mutual respect for all individuals. She recognizes the needs of her employees and colleagues and adapts when needed. Brooke has quickly made a huge impact in Iowa. She sits on the executive team at Businessolver; her contributions to the organization are noticed at every level. She has provided a host of individuals with mentorships. Her door is always open and she often she has a line of people who would like time with her for personal and professional advice. You will often hear employees say “I have a meeting with Brooke; I must be five minutes early, or I’m late!"

Brooke is keenly focused on the “end” or objective of any task and has an exceptional ability to see the big picture, she then scaffolds up the smallest of details to help others reach the end goal. She truly drives and motivates others to aspire to do the right thing, get it right the first time, not to settle, and most importantly, to get outside their comfort zone. Brooke leads by example; I have witnessed tremendous growth in Brooke over the course of her employment, she is always focused on continuous improvement and taking on more to learn.

Brooke’s remarkable talents for serving others, whether in business, management, leadership and/ or communication allows her to truly impact lives through her commitment to help others reach higher potential personally and professionally. She sits on the Make- A- Wish Iowa Board, supports Everybody Wins, weekly reads to an elementary mentee, and a host of other philanthropic work through the Businessolver Foundation.

I have worked with Brooke in stressful and complicated initiatives requiring high levels of intelligence and understanding. She has met every challenge, deadline, and goal presented and tackled every problem with grace and ease. Many of the solutions Brooke proposed were insightful and practical, and she showed a remarkable capacity for breaking large issues into manageable segments. Her innovative ideas and solutions increased our company’s profits and improved its efficiency. For example, she developed the Businessolver client services model that provides a robust way to service delivery for the company’s 600+ clients.

Brooke has served not only as a useful individual asset to our company, but also as a cooperative and attentive team-player. Her actions consistently inspire and motivate our other employees. She understands intuitively when colleagues need help. She brings a clear team spirt in knowing that no matter the work, winning and or losing is on the team. In the years that I have known and worked with Brooke, I have developed enduring respect for both her work ethic and her problem-solving abilities. I can confidently, without reservation, say that Brooke has made significant contributions and made an impact to her organization, both globally and within the local community, and certainly with her friends and family. She has my highest recommendation for the 2016 Woman of Influence Award. If you have any further questions with regard to her background or influence, please do not hesitate to contact me at (215) 888-9157.

Respectfully,

Byron Michael Smith