

Melanie McDowell

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Re: Shaun T. O'Donoghue

Dear Sir or Madam:

It is my pleasure to write about a very dear colleague of mine, Mr. Shaun O'Donoghue. Shaun and I worked together at Digitas (formerly known as Bronner Slosberg Humphrey) from 1994 through 2002. It was a time of extraordinary growth for our company and we were fortunate to be intimately involved with it's expansion from Boston to New York. Under his mentorship I was promoted from a Production Designer to a Studio Manager as he blossomed from a Creative IT Manager to the Director of Graphic Services.

Shaun was tasked with the incredible challenge of modifying workflow procedures that were developed for a single location to work across a global network of offices. He created a new model that improved efficiency and accountability for our department that was so effective that other departments and other domestic and international offices followed suit. He partnered with our vendors in customizing software to work in our unique environment. Companies such as Extensis, Markzware, and Meta Communications solicited Shaun's advice and approval on software products in development. Digitas was often used as a beta tester for state-of-the-art applications that revolutionized workflow procedures across our industry. New York became the flagship office for Creative Services.

Shaun's greatest strength as a manager was in the development of his personnel. I can attest how his belief in me enabled me to rise to greater challenges than I was aware I could handle. The morale of our department was very high under his leadership. We hired a talented staff that embraced his direction and trusted his instincts. Studios of major Advertising Agencies are historically the departments that get blamed for everything from typographic errors to overages of budgeted funds. Shaun created a reporting system that chronicled every stage of work so that, at any given time, we could track a job's progress and alert the entire marketing and creative team to possible issues that might impact the final deliverables for our client. With this system in place, each of our Production Designers was able to proactively involve Shaun and I when they felt our intervention was necessary, long before concerns turned into actual problems. Whether the situation called for extra time or reassessment of resources, we were prepared to act as opposed to react. Shaun also put in to place an internal quality control person whose sole task was to check all of our work before it got routed to the client. We discovered that this enabled our department to produce error-free work, which improved our image within the company.

It is to Shaun's credit that American Express, the New York office's largest client, requested his involvement in the restructuring of their Ratecard billing structure. They recognized that their own marketing executives did not know workflow procedures enough to properly budget their projects and so enlisted the help of his expertise to improve their internal process. Other Digitas clients requested bucketed style billing structures (as opposed to strict hourly billings) based upon the success of Shaun's recommendations.

What Shaun has done for my success, both personally and professionally, is extraordinary. He recognized my talent for inspiring and leading my production designers long before I did. He supported my growth and even gave me the task of creating a new color retouching department within our Studio that saved our clients thousands of dollars on a per job basis. I was the day to day manager while he concentrated on our position within the agency. I often found the means to implement his overall vision which made us a great team, admired by our colleagues. I have found that our working relationship has been the most important and fruitful collaboration of my entire career. It is with great conviction that I recommend Shaun O'Donoghue to lead Creative Services wherever his services are being considered.

Kind regards,



Melanie McDowell