

7th March, 2005

To whom it may concern,

Sir or Madam,

I am the principal usability specialist in Whirlpool's Global Consumer Design group. I have worked alongside Ali Vassigh for almost four years, and I am both pleased and privileged to write this letter of recommendation. Ali and I have worked together through numerous projects and numerous organizational changes and I have become very familiar with his work and with his management and leadership abilities. For the last two years I have reported to Ali as my manager.

Ali understands how to lead and inspire people and he knows how to manage and drive projects quickly to successful completion. As a leader Ali has the ability to create a clear vision, the ability to chart an unerring course towards success, and the ability to empower individuals to achieve their goals. He is an exceptional communicator who understands the importance of aiding others to embrace and commit to his vision. He is known for his open-door policy and is always approachable and available to help and guide his staff.

As a project leader Ali demonstrates a very high degree of professionalism, and a genuine and tireless dedication and thoroughness in all he does. He is a critical thinker and a problem solver *par excellence* who delights in sharing and exchanging knowledge and ideas.

During his time at Whirlpool he successfully initiated and led a number of major and game-changing projects. He inherited a group of inexperienced usability staff and in the course of two years reset the standards for operational rigour and excellence, set new guidelines for consistency, and provided new tools and templates. Under his guidance and mentorship the inexperienced team came within reach of genuine world-class performance. As a result of his vision and direction Ali's team continues to be in great demand throughout the company.

Ali was also responsible for the vision and organization that saw his team achieve something that few other usability teams anywhere have ever been able to accomplish: a reliable and fully validated usability metric that can be applied to all Whirlpool's products. This well-crafted method resulted from exceptional teamwork under his guidance and enabled the Global Consumer Design group to execute metrics-driven usability testing globally. The metric that Ali envisioned has proven to be a powerful predictive tool for the company. In addition to this Ali also conceived the need for an Audio Brand Language that would span Whirlpool's wide range of products, and he embedded this important initiative into a global user-interface project that won sponsorship from five Vice Presidents.

In summary, I regard Ali as a master strategist of exceptional vision, but also as someone in touch with the pulse of day-to-day tactical matters, and someone who never fails to give the fullest attention and consideration to the individual needs of his team members. I have learned much from Ali and our journey together has been a most enjoyable one. Reflecting on my career to date, I can confidently say, and with a feeling of some pride, that Ali is the finest manager that I have had the privilege of working with.

Should you wish to ask me questions about my experiences working with Ali, please feel free to contact me at the above telephone number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Hodgson', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Dr. Philip Hodgson