

Sample Essays – Champion Candidate

Note: Individual and company names have been removed.

How does the nominee demonstrate visible allyship in their workplace. Describe how the nominee actively supports and advocates for colleagues. Include examples such as sponsorship and efforts to change the status quo.

JEFF consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to empowering others and fostering an inclusive workplace culture at COMPANY. He was a staunch advocate for women's leadership, ensuring they had opportunities to take on leadership roles both internally and externally. His leadership paved the way for two Vice Presidents, who later became Presidents at different North American manufacturing companies, showcasing his lasting impact on elevating others into leadership positions.

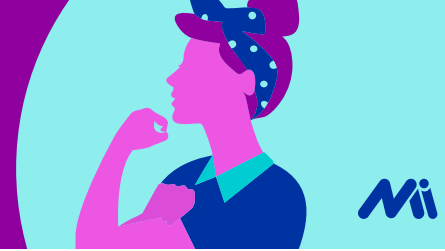
As a mentor and sponsor, JEFF went above and beyond to support high-achieving individuals. A prime example is his sponsorship of INDIVIDUAL, where he provided strategic cross-functional assignments. JEFF didn't just assign roles, he expanded INDIVIDUAL's leadership experience by advocating for her rotation to COUNTRY, offering valuable global exposure. He took a similar approach with others, personally guiding them through developmental opportunities to broaden their leadership capabilities.

Beyond mentoring, JEFF actively supports the advancement of others by participating in ERG events, Women in Manufacturing (WiM) meetings and summits. He is outspoken about the need for sponsorship, speaking at events aimed at other male leaders. His participation reflects his belief in the importance of diversity and his commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive environment for everyone in manufacturing.

What specific actions has the nominee taken to create a more positive and supportive culture? Share examples of how the nominee fosters collaboration, builds strong teams and ensures others feel valued and supported.

JEFF possesses an extraordinary talent for identifying untapped potential in his mentees and empowering them to surpass their own expectations. Through strategic cross-functional and stretch assignments, he creates transformative opportunities that challenge individuals to step beyond their comfort zones and into roles they may not have envisioned for themselves, fostering growth and building confidence. He does so by advocating for his capable mentees, especially when they are not present in a room full of opportunity.

JEFF's approach is not merely about task delegation; it is about intentional professional development that paves the way for new leadership opportunities and a new way of thinking. As a trusted mentor, JEFF believes his duties extend beyond being a supporter and advocate. He cultivates confidence by providing a two-way business relationship that ensures accessibility to his expertise at any time. He reserves time for regular "on-the-job development", navigating growth at the source and offering guidance as situations arise, making his mentorship an ongoing process.



JEFF's commitment extends beyond career advancement; he fosters an environment where women are recognized, valued and equipped to lead in the manufacturing field. His innovative and impactful approach to mentoring is a testament to his unwavering dedication to their empowerment and creating a more inclusive future for leadership in manufacturing.

How does the nominee engage with their broader community? Highlight the nominee's contributions to community initiatives.

JEFF is a passionate advocate for community engagement and workforce development, particularly in creating opportunities for nontraditional groups, including women. He actively partners with several key organizations, including NONPROFIT, where he serves as a board member and advocate. Through these roles, JEFF ensures that women have access to vital growth and leadership opportunities in the industry. He encourages senior managers and executives to participate in external initiatives and serve on boards, inspiring leaders to expand their influence and share their expertise. This approach aligned with his allyship with NONPROFIT, an organization dedicated to empowering women to take on leadership roles as board directors.

JEFF also takes a strategic approach by identifying valuable external networks and programs, such as UNIVERSITY CENTER, that provide women with opportunities to enhance their leadership potential and professional growth. He believes that fostering leadership opportunities in these high-level networks is essential to empowering women to reach their full potential.

A standout contribution in JEFF's career is his support of a female executive in the development of a program with the local university. This program, now a benchmark across COMPANY, is a testament to JEFF's leadership in fostering innovative educational initiatives that focus on investing in the workforce of the future. Through this program, he bridges the gap between academia and the manufacturing industry, providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in modern manufacturing.

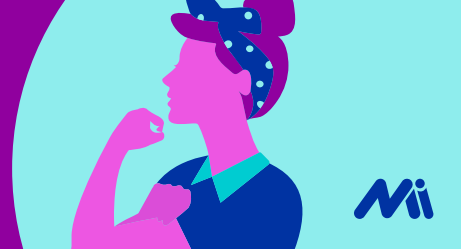
He is also dedicated to future talent pipelines, speaking at universities like UNIVERSITY and UNIVERSITY, recruiting new talent to the field.

Why should this individual be selected as a Champion? Reflect on their overall influence – inside and outside of the organization – and how they embody the values of allyship, mentorship and supportive leadership in manufacturing.

JEFF exemplifies what it means to be a Champion: someone who doesn't just support behind the scenes, but leads visible, sustained efforts to shift workplace culture, open doors and build lasting systems of support. His influence is not confined to one team or initiative – he has shaped leadership pipelines, corporate culture and community partnerships in ways that will outlast his own tenure.

STEP AHEAD

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Throughout his career, JEFF has modeled proactive allyship by identifying and developing high-potential individuals, advocating for their advancement even when they are not in the room. His sponsorship has propelled women into executive roles. What makes his approach distinctive is its intentionality. JEFF doesn't wait for formal programs to drive change – he creates the conditions for it to thrive, whether through stretch assignments, ERG engagement or reimagining what mentorship looks like.

Beyond his own organization, JEFF champions inclusion across the industry. From helping launch a workforce program with UNIVERSITY, to speaking at national forums and recruiting future talent, he sees allyship as an active, ongoing responsibility. JEFF embodies the values of STEP Ahead: he sponsors, mentors and builds. He listens, learns and leads. Most of all, he shows that allyship in manufacturing isn't about checking a box – it's about transforming a culture. That's the legacy he's building, and why he is so deserving of recognition as a Champion.