



July 27, 2011

Small Business Development Center
9800 Connecticut Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307

RE: Nomination Letter for Women Owned Small Business Person of the Year
Theresa M. Valade, CEO of Success Trek[®], Inc.

Dear Nominating Committee,

I am nominating Theresa Valade for the Women Owned Small Business Person of the Year because of her courage, persistence and success in launching her own business as well as her demonstrated commitment to the Northwest Indiana community. Theresa is one of Northwest Indiana's home-grown success stories. She grew up in Rensselaer, attended Purdue University, and received her MBA from IUN in 2007. During her graduate work, Theresa participated in the Institute for Innovative Leadership program and realized that her greatest strengths consisted of coaching people, improving personal and professional performance and creating solutions for companies struggling to overcome problems with their people, communications and workflow systems.

Upon receiving her MBA, Theresa had the courage to leave her full-time job to pursue her dream of founding her own business. As a third-generation entrepreneur, she recognized the value of taking risks in order to do what you love. Theresa first purchased a franchise called "The Growth Coach," but after 18 months she realized that she was providing solutions beyond the proprietary group coaching workshops offered by the franchise. Theresa took another calculated risk and rebranded herself and her services; a process that ultimately grew into her thriving company, Success Trek,[®] Inc.

I have known and worked with Theresa for 3 years and I can say that she is one of the brightest individuals and hardest workers I know. In the face of setbacks and economic downturns, she has remained persistent in her efforts to create a sustainable and profitable business in Northwest Indiana. For that, she is considered a leader within the business and non-profit communities here.

3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46804



In 2008 Theresa was recognized by BusINness Magazine as one of 20 under 40 up and coming professionals in the region, in 2009 she was named one of Northwest Indiana's Top CEOs and this past year she was nominated as one of Northwest Indiana's Most Influential Women.

In every sense of the word, Theresa is a success. She is a certified WBE in Indiana and has not only achieved her vision of creating a thriving company within her “home-town” region, but has also accomplished her mission of generating enough revenue to give back to the community who gave so much to her. As the Chesterton Chamber of Commerce recently reported, this past year Theresa celebrated her 5th year in business and more than \$50,000 of giving to Northwest Indiana's non-profit community. Theresa has always been committed to being what she would characterize as a socially responsible business owner, driven by the desire to not only build her business, but also to forge lasting relationships with local non-profit organizations. Theresa was a founding Board Member for Pathway Family Center as well as their Chair of Fundraising. She also served on advisory boards for the Lupus Foundation, Ivy Tech Information Technology Department, Lake County Purdue Extension and Community Christian Action.

Theresa's home-grown success story is an inspiration for women small business owners as well as all entrepreneurs in Northwest Indiana. She serves as a role model for those brave enough to follow their dreams, strong enough to work tirelessly to achieve them and committed enough to stay true to their values by defining success not just by revenues earned but also by time, energy and dollars given.

Sincerely,

Harlow Gregory
Executive Director
Center for Management Development
Indiana University Northwest