

## **The Recommendation**

By Ivellisse Torres in Business, Society, and Government

An employee was fired from company X for poor work performance, insubordination, and violation of confidentiality. Lack of organization and persistent failure to meet deadlines exemplified the poor work performance. The employee also improperly disclosed confidential information several times in various contexts. Finally when confronted by his supervisor with these problems, the employee displayed an uncooperative and insubordinate attitude.

Several steps were taken before firing. The employee was informed of his problems by means of several poor performance evaluations; he failed to respond to the problems mentioned. Then he was placed on probation. The company offered to send him to professional seminars that would have provided training to improve his performance. But he didn't pursue this option. Despite all these measures, the problem persisted, and the employee was fired as a last resort.

Several weeks after being fired, the employee returned to ask his former supervisor for a letter of recommendation. He had been having trouble finding work and had a family to support. He told his former supervisor that she "owed" him this letter.

### *Questions:*

1. Should the supervisor write a letter? How should he write the letter? What should he include in this letter? Discuss and evaluate various alternatives.
2. Discuss the ethics and feasibility of the following alternatives:
  - a. The supervisor should not write the letter.
  - b. The supervisor should write a letter focusing on the former employee's good points.
  - c. The supervisor should agree to write a letter but stipulate that he would include everything that is relevant.