



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Nicholson School of Communication and Media**

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To Whom It May Concern:

In 36 years of professional journalism, I have worked with hundreds of people in the daily grind of producing a newspaper, newscast or news website. Of all those I have been privileged to work with and call colleagues, Stephen Ruiz stands out for three attributes that come immediately to mind: prodigious, prolific and precise. Steve is one of the most disciplined writers/editors/content creators I have ever seen. For 10 years, we worked together in the sports department at the Orlando Sentinel. While Steve ably served in multiple roles at the Sentinel – reporter, writer, editor, web producer, even internship coordinator – he always managed to produce and provide so much more than what was expected of him. He would turn in, out of nowhere, a 1,000-word profile that magically filled a page for a weekend sports edition, while also covering a race at Disney on a Saturday and then showing up for a 5 a.m. breaking news shift on the web desk. His writing is sterling. He shapes, massages, polishes and cares about every word – but does so without being prickly or pedantic with his editors. He meets deadlines with good humor and focuses on excellence like a laser – not just on his own job but also across all parts of the operation. There are team players. Then there are those who punt, tackle, pass, toss you a Gatorade and put their heads down and plunge into the scrum for the half-yard you need for a crucial first down.

That's Steve.

He is warm, collegial and collaborative. Steve delivers. Steve punches above his weight. Steve is a genuinely decent and caring human being.

You could do no better than hiring him for a role in your organization. I am proud to know him and call him a friend.

Cordially,

Rick Brunson  
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