

June 19, 2003

To whom it may concern:



I am a Senior Staff Engineer in Solaris Kernel Development at Sun Microsystems, where I have worked for the past seven years. While I am primarily tasked with the development of the Solaris Kernel, I also end up working with customers when they have a problem that demands my technical expertise. When I encounter a customer of unusually high technical aptitude, I typically recommend that they apply to our *Platinum Beta* program. This program – run with each Solaris release – offers the following proposition to a hand-picked group of customers: in return for aggressively running our Beta Solaris product in their environment, we offer them direct engineering support. That is, instead of going through our normal Beta support channels, this select group of customers can simply page a development engineer to examine any problem they should have with the Beta product. This has been a wildly successful program for both us and for our Platinum Beta customers – we get to understand how our customers are using the product, and in return our customers get to influence the way that we develop it. Indeed, the program has been so popular that it has become increasingly oversubscribed: with each passing release, we have been able to be more and more selective, yielding a more and more elite group of customers with each release.

As part of the Platinum Beta program, Sun brings program participants to our offices in Menlo Park, California – giving participants the opportunity to meet both the development engineers and one another. It was in this context that I first met Jarod Jenson in 1997. At the time, Jarod was working for Enron Capital and Trade which had been selected to be a Platinum Beta site for Solaris 7. From the first meetings with Jarod, it was immediately obvious that, even among the rare breed that is the typical Platinum Beta customer, Jarod was a technologist of uniquely high ability: Jarod had technical depth and breadth coupled with systemic understanding that we had simply not seen before.

Our initial impressions were borne out in Solaris 7 Platinum Beta. Jarod found many more issues than any other customer. (It is perhaps not surprising that Jarod became a Platinum Beta customer again for Solaris 8 – and yet again for Solaris 9.) And while other Platinum Beta customers often found problems that one could dismiss as cosmetic or trivial, Jarod seemed to always discover deeper issues of design – issues that reflected his deeper understanding of the system.

Indeed, it is Jarod's understanding of the *system* that is just so impressive. While other customers may achieve mastery of one or two elements, they often struggle to understand the whole. Jarod seems to master not only each of the elements, but also their *interactions* with one another. This understanding can be seen in his uncanny sixth sense for system bottlenecks: Jarod has a better intuition for system performance than any engineer I have ever dealt with – at Sun or otherwise. (This is not an empty claim. One of my principal responsibilities in Solaris Kernel Development

has been drafting the performance strategy for Solaris; I can say with confidence that I have dealt with every engineer of consequence working on system performance at Sun. While Sun is endowed with many gifted engineers, none has been blessed with Jarod's intuition for system bottlenecks.)


While Jarod could easily stand on his intuition alone, he couples his intuition with a rigorous, scientific approach to systems analysis. In my experience, Jarod always has a good hypothesis – but he never claims it as fact unless he has gathered the data to prove his case.

Taken together, Jarod's keen intuition and rigorous methodology yield a unique technologist; I would strongly recommend Jarod without hesitation for the most challenging tasks of any technical nature. For problems pertaining to system performance in particular, I would recommend Jarod above all others that I have encountered in my career.

Should you have any questions about Jarod – or should you be interested in the technical details of the kinds of problems that I have seen Jarod solve – I would encourage you to contact me directly. If necessary, do not hesitate to call me at home; my contact details may be found below.

Sincerely,

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