**SolarComm Employee Biographies**

**Name**: Sean Flannigan

**Functional Group:** Engineering

**Title:** Lead Power Systems Engineer

**Location:** Boston, MA

**Years of Experience:** 27

**Education**: PhD, University of Virginia

**Skills**: Leadership and employee management; project management; technology and risk assessment; financial modeling; budgeting; working knowledge of power systems and components; photovoltaic systems design; contract review and negotiation; working knowledge of regulations; and construction monitoring

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives**: Although he would not think of himself as privileged, Sean has progressed in his education and career by identifying goals and working hard until he achieved them. He attributes all of his success to his work ethic. Sean finds common ground with people most easily when they share his interests in science, math, and a functional design.

**Characteristics**: Analytical; creative; interested in mechanical and technical projects; performs well in technology-focused leadership roles; highly process-oriented; strong verbal and graphical communication skills; data-driven; and a scientific approach to decision making

**Behaviors**: Sean meets annual project requirements on time and budget. He and his team act autonomously and with minimal oversight in the field. He requests access to research findings, thorough documentation, and other evidence of efficacy before adopting a new product or process. He speaks candidly when he sees reason for concern. Because his work requires him to spend a lot of time managing a team in the field, he prefers brief, tactical phone calls instead of extended, strategy meetings.

**Background**: Sean has been a lead power systems engineer for 6 years. Before that, he spent 10 years as a systems engineer for a major utility company in the western United States, where he managed a large team of technicians. Prior to that, he was a respected research scientist at a large state institution. The other power systems engineers at SolarComm elected Sean to speak for them and defer to Sean if asked for more participation. They provided Sean with a year of records showing that a dozen essential components arrived behind schedule. Records also showed that four major components were not manufactured to specification. Many of the Engineers told Sean that SolarComm’s problems originated from poorly negotiated procurement agreements that do not penalize the manufacturer when problems occur.

**Name**: Irma Trujillo

**Functional Group**: Procurement

**Title**: Procurement Manager

**Location**: Austin, TX

**Years of Experience**: 6

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Economics

**Skills**: Logistics and planning; thoroughly knowledgeable in SolarComm systems, including databases, presentation tools, and contracts database; able to understand and communicate highly technical information in a global, cross-functional, and multicultural work environment; and is fluent in English and Spanish

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Although Irma’s parents made little money, when she was young they paid for her to tuition at a private, college-preparatory school in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. She has never forgotten the sacrifices they made to ensure she would have more opportunity than they did. She is no stranger to proving herself in academic and professional life.

**Characteristics**: Analytical; highly organized; meticulous; deadline-oriented; strong implementation skills; and prefers a structured work environment

**Behaviors**: Irma works diligently during regular hours, usually between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (Central Time, U.S.), but makes adjustments to her schedule to accommodate business partners in Malaysia, China, and South Africa. She still defers to her previous manager, Bob Teller, when business partners request substantial changes to schedule, cost, or contract terms.

**Background**: Irma began her career at SolarComm 6 years ago as a business analyst. After 2 years of success, she elected to make a lateral move to the procurement group because she possesses both an aptitude and preference for logistics. She was promoted to procurement manager 8 months ago and manages a team of three procurement coordinators. Five months ago her manager, Bob Teller, called her into his office to discuss what he called “a concern from the field.” In the meeting, Irma learned that Sean Flannigan had sent an e-mail to her manager that blamed Irma and her team for failing to fulfill orders for custom-made components on time and to the quality mandated by law. When given an opportunity to explain her side of the story, Irma replied that Sean’s team changed the specifications for at least three of the projects. The changes made it impossible for her team to procure the correct components on the original schedule. Irma left Bob’s office and returned to work feeling angry at Sean for betraying their relationship and escalating the problem to her manager.

**Name**: Bob Teller

**Functional Group:** Procurement

**Title**: Senior Procurement Manager

**Location**: Austin, TX

**Years of Experience:** 16

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Business Administration

**Skills**: Contract negotiation; finance and business administration; highly skilled in logistics and planning; thoroughly knowledgeable in SolarComm products, solar power components manufacturers, and trends in the market place; able to understand and communicate highly technical information in a global, cross-functional, and multicultural work environment; and a manager with leadership and employee development training

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Bob has several years of experience in cross-cultural work environments. He occasionally travels overseas to tour manufacturing facilities, negotiate contracts, and manage the many legal and regulatory issues of international trade.

**Characteristics**: Skilled planner; looks for mutually beneficial agreements with business partners; and is a win-win negotiator

**Behaviors**: In the past, Bob has acted as the unofficial spokesperson for the procurement team. His team regularly meets company financial goals; his knowledge of the market often results in process improvements and fair contracts; he provides effective oversight and mentoring to his direct report, Irma Trujillo; and when previous executive managers rolled out new business processes, Bob often asked questions meant to identify and mitigate risks. Bob was a key decision maker in previous contract negotiations and in the development of existing processes.

**Background**: Bob Teller has worked at SolarComm for 16 years and was a key decision maker in the current vendor agreements and procurement processes. Because of his long history with SolarComm, Bob has developed strong, long-standing relationships with most of the solar consultants and engineers, including Sean Flannigan. Like Sean, the engineers will often contact Bob directly when they identify problems with orders or components. They trust he will “get things done” to fulfill the needs of the job and ultimately keep the customer happy.

**Name**: Sandra Cummins

**Functional Group:** Sales

**Title**: Regional Manager

**Location**: Salt Lake City, UT

**Years of Experience:** 12

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Engineering

**Skills**: Highly skilled at communicating complex, highly technical processes; trained in and expert practitioner of consultative sales techniques and SPIN selling techniques; adept at B2B and B2C sales methodology; and expert in the customer relationship management software (CRM) and other SolarComm systems

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** As a veteran of the United States Armed Forces, Sandra has unique skills and experiences that work. In addition to a high tolerance for stress and a mission-focused approach to her work, she has traveled and lived abroad on deployments to Europe, the Middle East, and South East Asia.

**Characteristics**: Mission focused; a strategic planner; bottom line-oriented; expert at moving the sales process forward; timely; strives to exceed the expectations; and empathic

**Behaviors**: Sandra achieved goals for the past 3 years as a solar consultant and is working hard to become an equally successful regional manager. She spends the majority of her time working directly with her team of solar consultants to drive business and has little time for additional projects. She has expressed an interest in continuing to grow within the business development group and knows the next promotion depends on demonstrated success in her current position.

**Background**: After serving in the United States Air Force, Sandra began her career in the solar power industry as a solar consultant for one of SolarComm’s top competitors. She proved herself an excellent sales representative by exceeding her sales goal consistently for 3 years and qualifying as a company-wide top performer 2 years in a row. The SolarComm Business Development team actively recruited her for the open regional manager position in Salt Lake City, Utah. She currently oversees a team of 13 solar consultants in a geographical region spanning from western Colorado to western Utah. In the past year, she has worked hard to network with managers throughout the company. Recently, her team has experienced delays in component shipments that have cost them future revenue. She never experienced such problems when she worked for her previous employer and is eager to find a fix.

**Name**: Aardash Bhatnagar

**Functional Group**: Sales

**Title**: Regional Manager, Inland Empire

**Location**: Riverside, CA

**Years of Experience**: 32

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Business

**Skills**: Highly skilled at communicating complex, highly technical processes; able to establish credibility and good will with executive decision makers at key accounts; and competent in the customer relationship management software (CRM) and other SolarComm systems

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Aardash immigrated to the United States and has been pursuing opportunities to establish himself as a leader in the community, raise a healthy family, and enjoy life ever since. His optimistic, determined outlook has driven him to succeed at one company after another over the past 32 years.

**Characteristics**: Self-starter; entrepreneurial; relationship focused; steady performer; entrenched in the industry; and sought after by close competitors

**Behaviors**: Aardash built strong relationships with his largest customers and actively maintains contact with them. He sponsors professional networking events and invites his customers to social events like family gatherings. He regularly achieves revenue goals. However, his region also suffers from high turnover of solar consultants who complain that Aardash undermines their decision-making authority in their territory.

**Background**: Aardash immigrated to the United States from northern India at the age of 18 and earned his Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Colorado, Boulder. His sales career began at Lockheed Martin, a global company with offices in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado. Two years later, he accepted a promotion and relocated to Lancaster, California, where he acted as the lead business development officer at an electric car company. He later worked as a manager of business development and community development for California’s largest power utility provider. Seven years ago, Aardash joined SolarComm as the regional manager for the Inland Empire. Despite his reputation for undermining new solar consultants, upper management regards him as an effective mediator who can quickly dispel tense situations. The recent problems with components that have plagued other customers have had little impact on his business.

**Name**: Sam Higginbotham

**Functional Group:** Marketing

**Title**: Marketing Manager

**Location**: Austin, TX

**Years of Experience**: 3

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Political Science

**Skills**: Research; content marketing; product differentiation; oral, written and graphic communication; social networking; search engine optimization; content development; and content strategy

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Three years out of college, Sam wants his professional work to be a source of positive change in the world.

**Characteristics**: Outspoken; evangelist for renewable energy; technology-focused; social networker; team-player; leader; self-promoter; and knowledgeable of market trends, government policies, and public opinion polls

**Behaviors**: As a marketing and public relations coordinator, Sam was responsible for managing the creation and approval of all outbound communications, including press releases, e-mails to customers, website content, and product descriptions. He also answered product-related questions from the sales force and from customers, including complaints when products were delayed. In his new role as marketing manager, Sam looks forward to driving awareness of the SolarComm products.

**Background**: While a student, Sam was actively involved in student organizations and, as a SolarComm employee, he is an enthusiastic evangelist for solar energy products and services. He began his career at SolarComm as a Marketing Coordinator 3 years ago and recently earned his promotion to marketing manager. When he heard that you were appointed to spearhead an initiative to solve the communication problems, he sent you an e-mail with ideas for using technology to improve transparency.

**Name**: Meredith Faust

**Title**: Marketing Manager

**Location**: Houston, TX

**Years of Experience**: 16

**Education**: Bachelor of Science, Marketing

**Skills**: Market strategy; strategy implementation; brand management; research; market segmentation; product differentiation; and people management

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Meredith was one of the first women to join the sales force at SolarComm, and she worked hard to exceed every expectation. Now a vital member of the SolarComm team, she has found a niche training and mentoring up-and-coming professionals at the company and in the community.

**Characteristics**: Focused; bottom line-oriented; empathic; strategic; collaborative; and a gifted trainer

**Behaviors**: Meredith’s longstanding visibility in the company, particularly as a sales force trainer, makes her a favorite of many solar consultants. She keeps in contact with many of them on a regular basis and has close friendships with many of the more senior solar consultants. When the sales force is confused about a product, or when problems emerge, Meredith is usually among the first to find a workable solution.

**Background**: Meredith began with SolarComm 16 years ago as a solar consultant and consistently achieved her revenue targets. After 6 years in the sales force, she took the position of marketing manager. As a marketing manager, she applied her experience as a solar consultant to differentiate products and develop effective go-to-market strategies. Since then, she has gained experience in market research and market segmentation. Meredith sees the current problems as a symptom of poor training and a tolerance for underperforming solar consultants. Her success as a solar consultant was due to her ability to provide accurate information on time. She believes the problems could be solved if the regional managers would take more time to train their teams and then hold them accountable.

**Name**: Peter Brueggeman

**Functional Group:** Human Resources

**Title**: Human Resources Manager

**Location**: University of California, Los Angeles

**Years of Experience**: 7

**Education**: Bachelor of Arts, Education

**Skills**: Performance management; organization development; employee onboarding, development, and needs assessment, and training; policy development and documentation; and communication

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Peter is passionate about employee rights and social equality in the workplace. His interest stems, at least in part, from his own experiences as a young man who was teased and bullied by his classmates.

**Characteristics**: Comfortable with ambiguity; analytical; strategic; persuasive; empathic; knowledgeable of company policies, employment law, and organizational behavior; ability to influence management; and ability to develop and implement employee training

**Behaviors**: One month ago, Peter was hired by SolarComm. He appears bright, eager to succeed, and excited to work with you on the team.

**Background**: Peter began his career in human resources 7 years ago at a software company based in California. The company was recently acquired by a large competitor, and Peter played a key role in the transition. Afterward, he returned to his hometown in Austin, Texas, where he joined SolarComm.

**Company**: Prototech

**Functional Group**: Manufacturing (Third-Party Vendor)

**Name**: Timothy Arden

**Title**: Manufacturing Supervisor, Team Lead

**Location**: Johannesburg, South Africa

**Education**: Not provided

**Skills**: Not provided

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Timothy has extensive cross-cultural experience working for a manufacturer with customers in Africa, Australia, the United States, and Europe. He conducts most of his work via e-mail, teleconference, and telephone.

**Characteristics**: Described as a collaborative partner; a good communicator; knowledgeable of SolarComm systems and product requirements; and a skilled troubleshooter

**Behaviors**: Your colleagues have reported that Timothy is knowledgeable of SolarComm’s current communication processes. They attest to the high quality of his work.

**Background**: Prototech is a long-time manufacturing partner and now the primary manufacturer for SolarComm’s components. Although Prototech does not provide you with its employees’ profile information, Timothy is a well-known and respected manufacturing supervisor at Prototech. Under the new agreements between your companies, Timothy has been named manufacturing supervisor, team lead, and he has been assigned to act as Prototech’s liaison to SolarComm.

SolarComm executives see a strategic opportunity in strengthening their communication channels with Prototech. Employees at both companies recognize that they must work together to establish shared expectations and prevent delays to shipments and flawed components. You have no doubt such problems exist, although records show that they occur infrequently.

**Company Name:** Altimex Corporation

**Functional Group:** Manufacturing (Third-Party Vendor)

**Name**: Nurul Musa

**Title**: Director of Manufacturing

**Location**: Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

**Education**: Not provided

**Skills**: Not provided

**Diverse Cultural Perspectives:** Nurul Musa has extensive cross-cultural experience working for a manufacturer with customers in the Malaysia, Southeast Asia, Australia, the United States, and Europe. She travels extensively overseas to meet clients, negotiate contracts, and manage the many legal and regulatory issues of international trade.

**Characteristics**: Not provided

**Attributes**: Not provided

**Behaviors**: Not provided

**Background**: Nurul Musa is the director of manufacturing for third-party vendor, Altimex Corporation, one of SolarComm’s preferred vendors for solar power system components. Altimex does not provide SolarComm with its employees’ background information. However, you know that Nurul was a key player in the recent vendor contract negotiations. Her team will be trained to use SolarComm’s design, manufacturing, and office management software over the next 3 weeks. Nurul and her team have not been trained on SolarComm’s existing communication methods.

SolarComm executives see the new partnership with Altimex Corporation as a means of reducing their long-term dependence on Prototech for manufactured components. Altimex Corporation recognizes the opportunity to grow the partnership and has made commitments to establish methods of immediate, clear communication.