Recommendation for Steve Chan

I am delighted to write this letter of recommendation in support of Steve Chan candidacy for your position. I have known Steve as a student in my graduate seminar on decision making in the psychology department and as a member of my lab. Over the last three years, I have had many opportunities to discuss with him our mutual research interests, read his papers, and hear his presentations in meetings and conferences. I have greatly enjoyed our conversations over the years, and appreciated the broad investigative spirit he brought to my lab. From the beginning Steve has distinguished himself as an extremely thoughtful and persistent student and, as he has grown as both a researcher and teacher, he has continued to demonstrate his intelligence and dedication. He has presented his research in my lab and at conferences numerous times. On those occasions, he was clear and engaging in his presentation and was able to successfully field audience questions.

During his graduate studies, Steve has been able to develop a well-defined interest in comparison processes. I’m most familiar with his work on temporal comparisons, which is truly amazing. Steve shows that such comparisons are biased because the outcome depends on the direction of the comparison. For example, asking whether one is better off now than a year ago leads people to place greater weight on the present than the past. Steve’s research has not only demonstrated the bias in a wide range of contexts, but has also identified the underlying mechanism, namely, greater attention and weighing of the point in time that is the focus of the question. This bias, which Steve calls temporal focalism, has important theoretical and practical implications, and is in my opinion one of the most interesting manifestations of focalism.

In working on the project, Steve has demonstrated an unusual ability to integrate a large amount of research and extract its implications for real life comparison processes. I was impressed by the depth of his understanding of the relevant theoretical and experimental issues and his ability to apply basic psychological principles to marketing related phenomena.

In sum, Steve is an original thinker who loves and is deeply committed to research. He is capable of generating new ideas and translating them into implementable research programs, and he is genuinely concerned about the theoretical and applied aspects of what he is studying. Steve’s interests span across a broad range of areas. But his breadth doesn’t come at the expense of detailed and sophisticated expertise in each of those areas. Steve is also a very
helpful, friendly, and open-minded person. He would be an asset to any marketing department. I, therefore, wholeheartedly recommend him for your position.

Yaacov Trope
Professor of Psychology and Marketing