

# Building a Cohesive Culture Results in Dedicated Employees and Loyal Customers

Erland Construction, headquartered in Burlington, Massachusetts was founded in 1977 as the open shop arm of a major construction firm to serve the needs of an office developer in the Burlington area. The company built its reputation on a strong customer service and building relationships instead of focusing solely on the bottom-line. Steve McDonald, President of Erland Construction, explains, “Unlike some other companies, our people’s performance is not measured solely by the profit of a project. Our goal is to have our clients not only request Erland Construction for their next project, but to also request the specific individuals who worked on their previous job. It is clear to everyone at our company that we place tremendous value on developing long-term relationships with our clients.”

In the early 90’s, during the office market recession, Erland took the time to evaluate their business strengths and to understand what set them apart from other construction companies. They realized that the private school market had potential growth opportunities and was a good fit for their company because of the value these institutions place on high quality work and strong preconstruction services. The relationships Erland had built over the years, founded on quality work, honesty, customer service and integrity, served them well in penetrating this new market. Many of their academic clients have now been with them for 15-20 years, choosing Erland for all of their building needs. Some of their clients include Babson College, Roxbury Latin School, Fay School and Merrimack College.

**“As more talent becomes available it will be important for us to bring in the right people that will contribute to Erland’s long term success. The Predictive Index will certainly play a role in that process.”**

***Steve McDonald,  
President of Erland Construction***

## **Build Strong Teams**

As Erland continued to grow, they understood that they were only as good as their people. It was important to the management team to determine how individual employees would fit into the project team culture and how best to develop them for long-term success.

Steve learned of the behavioral assessment tool Predictive Index (PI) during a local association meeting. He became interested in using this tool to help understand what motivated his employees and to open up the lines of communication within the project teams.

Steve, along with his executive team, attended the PI Management Workshop. Upon completion of the training, they applied the insight gained through the Predictive Index to a newly formed project team. The PI provided them with objective information showing them that this team was made up of all “chiefs” who viewed sharing information only on a “need to know” basis. This insight identified potential challenges around communication for this group. Chuck Vaciliou, Erland’s Director of Operations, got together with the project team and shared this insight with them. The members appreciated learning about each other’s different work and communication styles, and together determined that it would be important for them to meet as a team on a weekly basis to optimize communication. Steve notes, “Today, with the increased communication, it is an absolutely terrific project and everyone is working well together. The teams that we have assembled using the Predictive Index work together more cohesively and effectively by understanding each individual’s strengths and those of the team.”

**Future Leaders**

The average employee at Erland has been with the company for 13 years, with several being employed since the company's inception. The company values the longevity and loyalty of its talented staff and strongly believes in promoting from within. As the company continued to grow, it became increasingly important for Erland to identify and develop potential future leaders. The Predictive Index provided a roadmap from which employees had strong, natural leadership qualities and were motivated to grow. For example, after 30 years with Erland, the Chief Estimator, was approaching retirement. A long-term employee with an exceptional record was identified as a potential successor for this critical and highly visible role. With the insight from the Predictive Index, the senior team was able to identify areas where additional training and development would be beneficial to the candidate's professional growth and strategies for top motivation through the transition and beyond.

As Erland looks to the future, they will continue to focus on developing their people and adding high quality workers that fit into their customer service environment. The importance of employee development and training will remain at the forefront of their initiatives. All Erland employees participate in company-sponsored training, providing consistency across the organization, helping to optimize performance. Since developing this program two years ago, which includes the Predictive Index, every project has been conducted in a professional manner, with all targets and schedules being met.