

Case Study:

Lacks Wheel Trim Systems Inc.
Michigan

Align Resources for Improved Communication and Future Growth

Lacks Wheel Trim Systems, Inc., a division of Lacks Enterprises, Inc, is an automotive wheel components supplier. Lacks Enterprises was founded in 1961, and employs more than 2,000 people dedicated to delivering excellent service and value-added automotive solutions.

The Wheel Trim division was involved in a new plant start-up in 2005. To meet the rigorous demands of staffing an entire operation, Lacks determined it would be beneficial to gain additional insight from a behavioral assessment tool to ensure strong job fit, and high customer service levels. During this process, the Lacks Wheel Trim HR team, led by Manager of Human Resources, Shelley Ramirez, evaluated several behavioral assessment tools before later identifying Predictive Index® (PI®) from PI Worldwide® as a good long term option. Shelley worked with Paul Dumouchelle of ADVISA, a PI Worldwide Member Firm, to present PI to the Lacks team, and to conduct a PI Management Workshop where the managers were educated on the use and application of the tool. Shelley explains, “We needed a management tool, and the Predictive Index (PI) provided the most versatility. It’s not just a hiring tool. PI can be used for other management applications such as employee development, coaching and conflict resolution.”

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Shelley Ramirez
HR Manager

Business Challenge

In early 2009, the human resources department was faced with a need to realign resources within the department to best support changing needs in the corporation. As a result, it was decided to reorganize within the corporate HR function. The goal was not to downsize the department, but rather to re-evaluate its existing structure and designate roles by determining strongest job fit. PI was used extensively in the process to help with the re-design as well as to promote more effective career-pathing for the HR personnel.

Predictive Index in Practice

Shelley and her team identified gaps in the existing structure, but a recent downturn in business meant they could not hire additional staff. Instead, they would have to re-assess each role in the organization. “Using PI and the PRO, a PI companion tool that profiles the behavioral requirements of the job, has been critical to the process,” explains Shelley. The PIs of the entire staff were reviewed, and a PRO was created for each position. The key requirements of the PRO were compared against each individual’s PI. Shelley then examined job fit by creating a color-coded spreadsheet of PI traits per person, to allow decision-makers to easily absorb key information of the people involved. She validated the PRO considering current high performers and from that identified the most critical traits and compared that against those to be considered. According to Shelley, “PI has given us the objective criteria to evaluate all of our HR employees, and make more effective staffing decisions across the team. More importantly, PI helped us gain valuable insight in determining how to best utilize resources for future organizational growth.”

PI offers insight and knowledge to make the right job placement decisions, resulting in stronger job fit. For example, Shelley used PI to identify those team members who would function more effectively in a specialist rather than generalist role. PI played a significant role in the team’s decision to place employees in roles that better fit their natural behavioral style.

According to Shelley, “PI is a very powerful organizational tool. It helps teams uncover workplace behaviors that were not readily apparent before.” Shelley cites an example in which two people were being considered for a Risk Manager position. The PIs of each candidate indicated that one candidate’s risk avoidance trait was much higher than the other. The PRO indicated risk avoidance as being a key requirement of the position, and PI provided the insight to make the right job decision.

Communication

Lacks has found the Predictive Index to be a powerful tool in developing better communication throughout the organization. Lacks uses PI to coach managers to better understand why an employee may be reacting or responding in a certain way. PI helps managers learn to modify their behavioral style as necessary to communicate and work more effectively with their teams.

PI is also used for conflict resolution. A communication issue may arise between two members of a team. PI provides a way to openly discuss communication styles and allows individuals to recognize their differences and strengthen their ability to work together.

Shelley adds, “We are a very technically-oriented company. PI helps forge communication, and provides us with a common language to communicate about individual behaviors and work styles. Most importantly, PI has helped us align our organization for future growth and success.”

Extending Success into the Future

“Our division currently has 350 employees and continues to expand its use of PI,” explains Shelley. “We have presented PI’s benefits to our corporate leadership team, and recommended that PI be implemented across Lacks Enterprises.”