

Case Study:

XOMA
California

PI Worldwide 

Improved Communication Results in Strong Teams

XOMA is a biotechnology company located in Berkeley, California. They are a leader in the development and manufacture of therapeutic antibodies and other agents designed to treat inflammatory, autoimmune, infectious and cancerous diseases. Founded 28 years ago, the company has multiple businesses generating revenues from royalties on marketed drugs, technology licensing, government projects, and pharmaceutical partnerships. XOMA has about 200 employees.

Steve Engle was hired as President of XOMA in 2007. Steve had prior experience using the behavioral assessment tool, Predictive Index®, to improve organizational performance, and wanted to introduce the tool to his new team. Scott Lappin, of Performance PI, a PI Worldwide® Member Firm, presented the Predictive Index (PI®), to Steve's executive team. Steve's team instantly realized the value of the tool for creating strong job fit, building effective work teams, and improving communication across the organization. The executive team and over one hundred managers were trained in PI this past year. The training provides them a good command of PI, and they use the tool to successfully lead and motivate their teams.

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Chris Wells
VP of HR and IT

Chris Wells, VP, Human Resources and IT explains, "PI helps you understand the behavioral propensities of individuals which helps both managers and their employees gain awareness of the behaviors that work to their advantage as well as those that get in their way. The tool also gives managers insight into how to motivate their employees to work more effectively."

Strong Job Fit

Every new XOMA employee completes the PI as part of the recruiting process. The HR team utilizes PI in conjunction with the PRO (Performance Requirement Options), which defines the requirements of the job in behavioral/Predictive Index terms, to provide key insight to make the right hiring decision. According to Chris, "Our turnover last year was as low as it's ever been at XOMA. The HR selection process has become more refined. PI has played a role in ensuring the right person is in the right job from a fit perspective. A top HR initiative this year is to create PRO's for all positions within the company. PI has helped us uncover the behaviors and work styles that lead to the right job fit." This model also pertains to examining the fit of current employees, for example, assessing the degree of congruence between a PRO and the job incumbent's profile. This insight in turn may lead to developmental activities including training, coaching or reassignment, or job restructuring at an individual or organizational level.

Team Building

Managers use PI to better understand group dynamics. Chris explains, "XOMA uses the team development model for team building, and PI plays an important role in this process. One of the key stages of team development is building trust. We accomplished this by understanding an individual's work style and behavior." By analyzing PI profiles, managers can identify both individual and group behavior and then determine how to best structure and manage their teams. Most importantly, managers use the PI profiles to more rapidly and effectively handle problem situations that may arise.

Performance Management and Conflict Resolution

PI gives managers the insight they need to better understand performance management issues. Managers are able to coach and mentor their employees to become more effective in their roles. PI helps managers identify and proactively address issues such as motivation, role tension, and emotional processing which may affect performance. PI also allows managers to gain an objective understanding of similarities and differences between co-workers. By analyzing PI profiles, the co-workers are better able to understand their work styles and design ways to effectively work together. Chris explains, "When there is a conflict between employees we do not meet with the individuals to mediate resolution until we've reviewed each employee's PI. This helps us gain insight into what may be causing the relationship issues."

Professional Development and Career-Pathing

PI is used to help individuals assess their PI profile in relation to the career path they want to pursue. They can recognize any potential challenges or disconnects between their PI and next steps required for their career growth. XOMA does a talent assessment on a yearly basis, and PI is used to help determine where XOMA's high potential talent lies within the organization.

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