

**Case Study:**

Shawmut Design and Construction  
Boston, Massachusetts

# Managing Conflict in a High Growth Environment

Shawmut Design and Construction is a leader in the construction industry with 300 employees and \$350 million in annual sales. Because of its reputation for quality and client service, Shawmut dominates several segments of the construction market and continues to expand.

**The Challenge:** In an industry historically plagued by rough-and-tumble practices, late delivery, and cost overruns, Shawmut aims to sustain growth and provide extremely high client satisfaction, while building a corporate culture that develops, supports, and energizes its people. President Jim Ansara is continually focused on building leadership and skill in his project teams to maintain the firm's success and to manage the inevitable interpersonal issues that come up, jeopardizing projects on tight schedules.

**“Just as we wouldn't start to build a building without a good set of blueprints, we don't put together a team of people to build a building without using PI.”**

**Jim Ansara**  
**President**

Shawmut's managers are highly competent, self-directed people who are dedicated to getting outstanding results and completing jobs on time. “When you're working under tight deadlines, conflicts are inevitable,” said Ansara. “Issues of control and questions of who's in charge are common. It can be very difficult to get so many talented and confident people to work together.”

Ansara cites the example of a recent project, a large and complex renovation at a college. “It was a 12-month job that had to be completed in 12 weeks over the summer break,” he said. “The site supervisor felt the project manager was keeping him out of the loop and not giving him enough facts to get the job done. The project manager thought the site supervisor was getting information on a need-to-know basis and that he should just do his work.” Their relationship began deteriorating, threatening the success of what was already a very challenging situation.

**The Process:** Ansara and the Group VP brought the two managers together for a meeting. Using information provided by the Predictive Index (PI), they talked with them about their different needs for information on the job and the two discussed how to handle the sharing of details in the future. “They didn't become best friends but they developed an understanding of their different styles of communication and they got to a place where they can now work together.”

Ansara says that he uses PI regularly to help him manage conflicts like these and to put together project teams. “Just as we wouldn't start to build a building without a good set of blueprints, we don't put together a team of people to build a building without using PI to construct our team and to coach them in how to resolve their conflicts,”

**The Results:** Ansara said. “Since the time we began using PI, our sales and our employees have grown by 800%. PI has been a part of our success.”

**The Predictive Index®** is a unique, in-house management tool used by executives throughout the world for almost 50 years to develop leaders and build successful businesses. PI Worldwide is an international association of management consultants who help companies use PI to manage their most important resource—their people.