

Case Study:

St. Mary Medical Center
Apple Valley, CA

Strong Job Fit Creates Bottom-Line Results

Company Overview: St. Mary Medical Center is a 186-bed acute care hospital employing more than 1500 staff and doctors in the High Desert (the area between Loma Linda, CA and Las Vegas, NV). St. Mary is part of the St. Joseph Health System which is comprised of 14 hospitals and additional health services within three regions: Northern California, Southern California, and West Texas/Eastern New Mexico.

The Challenges: Jeff Jernigan, Vice President Human Resources and member of the hospital's executive management team understood the challenges he would be facing when he joined St. Mary in 2002. The Medical Center was experiencing high turnover and worker compensation injury rates, as well as employee relation issues. Jeff investigated these critical issues and found a significant underlying problem: people were not happy in their positions due to poor job or department fit.

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Jeff Jernigan
VP HR, St. Mary Medical Center

Prior to coming to St. Mary, Jeff was the Vice President Human Resources at an engineering and manufacturing firm. He used the personality assessment tool, Predictive Index® (PI) to resolve some of the same issues he was facing at St. Mary. PI was so successful in that company that they were the recipient of numerous awards including national recognition in Workforce magazine in 2001 for being one of the best run companies in America. The Predictive Index was credited as a key tool used in the company's success.

Using PI as a strategic tool, Jeff created a plan to address the human resource issues at St. Mary Medical Center. The objective was to gain insight into the behavioral drives of the employees to insure a strong job fit. Moving forward, future employees would be given the PI to identify their natural strengths prior to placement. Jeff shares his confidence in PI, "I have used behavioral assessments in various applications for almost thirty years and have not found a more reliable, easier to use, workplace-friendly instrument with wider applications than the Predictive Index."

This strategy held the promise of success, but there was an obstacle. The St. Joseph Health System had a practice of not using pre-employment assessments. Not to be deterred, Jeff proposed an experimental program spanning the next two years. The executive team and the corporate human resources staff provisionally agreed.

The Finance division of the hospital was chosen to pilot the Predictive Index program. This division consists of departments you would expect: payroll, accounting, compliance and managed care contracts, as well as non-traditional areas such as: the business office, materials management, engineering and facilities management. Combined they represent 24% of the hospital's employees. Positions range from the director level to custodian.

In addition to PI being used initially for strong job fit, PI was incorporated into St. Mary's "Select for Success" program in which managers are trained to strengthen their interviewing and hiring skills. The program includes a library of behavioral-based interview questions and support materials to be used during the hiring process. Using the insight provided by the Predictive Index and its companion tool the PRO (profiles the job), the hiring managers could pinpoint the most effective questions to ask during the interview to further probe the candidate's behavioral tendencies.

The Plan: Jeff's three phase plan spanning over the next two years was:

Phase 1: 6 months

- Implement PI in the Finance Division of the Medical Center
- Train the CFO, key HR staff, and a representative in corporate Human Resources in the Predictive Index.

Jeff insisted on training a key person from the St. Joseph System in the Predictive Index so the parent organization would understand the benefits of PI.

- Use PI exclusively for internal transfers within the Finance division
- Integrate PI into the “Select for Success” interview program.

Phase 2: 1 year

- Management training to include PI in the interview process
- Implement PI for all hires and transfers within the Finance Division utilizing both the PI and the PRO

Phase 3: Current

- Implement PI throughout St. Mary Medical Center
- Consult with corporate Human Resources regarding implementation in other hospitals within the system.

The Results: Phase 1 and 2 are complete. St. Mary’s management team is pleased with the difference the Predictive Index made to the Finance division’s turnover and accident rate, and employee morale. During the 18 month period, there were 7 employees transferred internally and 21 positions filled externally. The results of the pilot program include:

Turnover

Of these 28 employees who were placed using PI in positions in the Finance division, there was **no turnover**. This resulted in a savings of \$44,700. This also contributed to an overall percentage reduction in turnover for the hospital bringing them well below the benchmark for hospitals in Southern California.

Worker Compensation and Employee Relations

There was one worker’s compensation claim and no disciplinary actions in the positions filled using the PI. The reduction in worker’s compensation claims resulted in an additional savings of approximately \$48,000, for a total savings of \$92,700. Jeff explains how PI contributed to this improvement. “In order to minimize accidents (falls and cuts) the kitchen staff needs to be methodical and slower paced due to the repetitive nature of the tasks. They also need to work long hours without losing the ability to focus or become dangerously fatigued. The Predictive Index provides the insight to place people in the right jobs, creating happy, productive, and safe employees.”

Future: Jeff and his team are getting ready to begin Phase 3, which will implement the use of PI for hiring throughout St. Mary Medical Center. Based on the success of the pilot program, St. Mary management is anticipating similar results in all areas of the hospital. Additionally, other hospitals in the St. Joseph Health System are evaluating PI for their organizations in the near future.

“When used properly, the PI takes the guesswork out of making the right hiring decision. Team building, coaching for interpersonal effectiveness and leadership development take on new clarity and focus when refined by the insight provided by the Predictive Index.”

The Predictive Index® is a unique, in-house management tool used by executives throughout the world for 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.