

Case Study:

Persona Inc.
Watertown, South Dakota

Reorganizing for Growth

Persona, Inc. in Watertown, South Dakota produces high quality, custom signs for major corporations, including petroleum and hotel/motel businesses. The company was founded in 1980 by Dennis Holier with just 3 people and 7000 square feet of production space. He grossed \$125,000 in their first year. Over the next two decades, Persona expanded their facility twice, increased their employment ranks to 300 and increased annual sales to over \$20 million.

The Challenge: In 1997, Persona came under the leadership of a new President, John Tischer. His goal was to accelerate the company's growth. He recognized that to do so, he had to assess the company from three vantage points: systems and operations, training, and people resources.

"We wanted to be the best sign company in the nation, with the best people," he said, "and stay in front of the competition. People make all the difference. It's a matter of having the right people in the right jobs and motivating them right."

The Process: Tischer knew that to expand rapidly and adapt to change, he would need people in key roles who could drive the business forward. Trained to use the Predictive Index (PI) when he was a senior manager in the banking industry, he knew that PI was the tool that could provide him with the insight to make these critical, strategic decisions.

As might be expected in a manufacturing business, a number of the senior managers had worked their way up through the organization. In many cases, the PI showed their strengths were technical, not managerial. In order to accomplish the aggressive growth strategy, Tischer recognized that he would have to institute significant changes. He rearranged the senior managers' responsibilities to better suit their strengths, and hired some new management talent whose patterns indicated they could push the company to greater levels of success. Additionally, Tischer believed that "anybody who leads, directs, and is accountable for others should be trained to use PI", so he invested in training Persona's top 20 managers.

The Results: Tischer believes there are no quick fixes for finding the right people and building a successful company, but he believes the Predictive Index has given him a distinct advantage. He sees that advantage in the ranks of managers trained to use PI who can communicate more effectively with their direct reports and motivate them for peak performance. He sees it in the individual, enterprising purchasing manager, identified with the help of PI, who dramatically reduced freight and materials expenses, saving the company \$350,000 in his first year on the job.

"Thanks to PI, this company doesn't hire people who don't fit their jobs any longer," he said. "I am surrounded by top-notch people and we have no turnover to speak of."

John Tischer
President

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.