

Case Study

American Health Network (AHN)
Indianapolis, Indiana

American Health Network Builds Stronger Teams, Enhances Job Fit and Employee Communication with Predictive Index®

American Health Network LLC (AHN) is a multi-specialty medical group based in Indianapolis, Indiana with more than 75 offices across the Midwest. Founded in 1994 by a group of physicians seeking a better method of delivering quality health care, today AHN continues to serve communities through a powerful network of 200 physicians and 1800 employees.

Building Better Clinical Teams

American Healthcare Network is comprised of clinicians, technicians and support staff. When Healthcare HR veteran Monica Wearren joined the company as Organizational Development Manager, there was a good deal of conflict among the employees, particularly within the physician community, that was ultimately affecting employee morale, retention and patient service. With the understanding that the core of conflict lies in behavioral differences and poor communication, Wearren looked to a tool to gain unique insights into physicians' personalities to help improve workplace interactions. Working with AHN's President and CEO, Dr. Ben Park, it was important to identify a behavioral assessment that was scientifically-validated and reliable. AHN found the strongest fit with the Predictive Index® (PI®) System from PI Worldwide, primarily because, as Wearren describes, "We're a very data driven, evidence-based organization and so the scientific-rigor behind PI assured us that it would provide a high level of predictability."

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*Monica Wearren,
Organizational Development Manager,
American Health Network*

After the PI was administered to the clinicians, the 10 minute survey showed that these individuals exhibited highly dominant personalities and a strong need for autonomy. These strong traits coupled with different styles of decision making and poor communication all contributed to workplace and team instability. Wearren describes, "While we value these higher dominance drives and higher sense of compliance type personalities in delivering exceptional care, we need to make sure our teams are diversified in terms of personality to limit conflict that could impact patient care." Based on the PI knowledge, Wearren and her team were able to better structure medical teams to ensure a balance of behaviors. "With the PI insight, we can better anticipate personality clashes and thus can surround our clinicians with the appropriate personnel and resources that will not impede on efficiency or patient care," she says.

Hiring PROs

Following the success of applying the PI to building better physician teams, Wearren extended the use of PI to non-clinician managers to support better hiring and coaching practices. Wearren established a development curriculum for the non-clinical managers which incorporated a two-day PI Workshop to teach them how to interpret PI results and apply the knowledge to dealing with an array of scenarios. As trained PI Analysts, they also learned to leverage the Performance Requirements Options™ (PRO), a job analysis tool from PI Worldwide that enables organizations to hone in on the personality characteristics necessary for success in a particular role.

By comparing a PI and a PRO, managers can see the fits and gaps between a candidate and the needs of the job to make more informed hiring decisions. Wearren says, “I’ve had managers say ‘I hate interviewing because I just don’t know what criteria to measure or the questions to ask.’” Upon implementing the PI and PRO process, managers have reported having greater confidence in interview scenarios because the behavioral data helps them to ask the right questions and focus on important issues specific to the candidate and the job. One manager remarked to Wearren, “In the interview, I already know them a little bit as it relates to their drives so I can ask questions that would challenge them based on their PIs but in the context of what the PRO says is needed.” AHN has created PROs for four main non-clinical job categories that are considered “high-impact,” or positions for which they do a lot of hiring. These include:

- **Patient Service Representatives:** Front desk employees responsible for greeting patients;
- **Patient Care Representatives:** Medical assistants and technicians who provide care and treatment;
- **Patient Account Representatives:** Manage business processes;
- **Practice Managers:** Manage the facility and oversee the practice

Each role is unique and requires very different behaviors to create strong and effective teams. Patient Account Representatives for instance, are tasked with mitigating patient financial and billing issues which requires a certain degree of patience, formality and control. Meanwhile Practice Managers, Wearren notes, work closely with medical teams to ensure the practice runs smoothly.

In addition to using the PRO tool with job candidates to gauge job fit, the assessment is also used with current employees to increase self-awareness and provide managers with information to which they can coach more effectively. Managers use the PI to enhance understanding and deliver constructive feedback. According to Wearren, “Managers are able to better articulate feedback because they’re able to capture it in language that is consistent with how the employee wants to hear it and then provide the coaching in a way that the employee is going to best receive and implement it.” She continues, “PI has definitely enhanced manager confidence, which is key since the managers are the make or break cross points in our offices.”

Wearren shares a case where one manager had an employee in an accounting position who continuously tried to help in other areas of the organization, causing a lot of disruption in the practice. According to her PI, the employee thrived in fast-paced environments with a lot of social interaction—the complete opposite of the role she was in. Recognizing this through the PI, the manager moved the employee into a customer service facing role in which she has since excelled.

A Tool to Support Change Management

With the continuously changing healthcare environment, companies like AHN are tasked with keeping employees informed as to changes and enhancements that directly impact their jobs. Wearren says, “The PI is and will continue to be helpful in smoothing some of the edginess that comes with change by enabling our leaders to communicate information more effectively and in ways that resonates with the employees. As new initiatives come down the pike in the market and in our company, the PI will be instrumental in making these processes much more manageable.” One example Wearren notes is the widespread use of Electronic Health Records (EHRs). AHN is constantly updating its approach to EHRs to keep up with all the new ways electronic records can be used for patient care, to capture analytics and make process improvements. “With 1800 employees and 75 offices, a ‘one size fits all’ approach will not work. It is important that we can communicate to different people in different ways to ensure everyone gets the message,” says Wearren.

Using the PI to help tackle the issues of employee development, and employee engagement has created new dialogues and coaching opportunities throughout the organization. Prior to Wearren’s role at AHN, no one had

really pursued management training and development before. Wearren says, “PI has provided such a great platform for us to begin talking about employee development and self-development and empowering our staff to work to the top of their potential.” Although initially, some people were reluctant to take a PI, managers today are realizing the value of the tool and proactively asking to take the survey, participate in training and have their staff take the PI.

Another important change that AHN is looking to manage more effectively includes the patient experience and care. In optimizing satisfaction and service, Wearren and her team plan to use the PI as they explore the correlation between employee satisfaction and quality patient care. Wearren notes, “Research shows you can’t attack a big issue like patient experience without looking at the things that go into that—and a lot of it has to do with people. So if you’ve got disgruntled or dissatisfied or underutilized employees in your office, you can’t expect them to create a great patient experience, consistently and over time. That is an initiative that will certainly benefit from the Predictive Index.”