Case Study: Johnsonville Sausage

Developing Leadership to Manage Growth

After implementing the PI® system:

• Managers can identify and understand their own management and leadership styles.
• The company has experienced enhanced teamwork, professional growth and organizational success.

THE CLIENT

Wisconsin-based Johnsonville Sausage is the number one national brand of bratwursts, Italian sausage, smoked-cooked links and fresh breakfast sausage links. Their products are available in 39 countries including France, Japan, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Mexico and the United States. The company is family owned today, with more than 1,000 employees (known as members within the firm).

THE OPPORTUNITY

Though successful since its founding in 1945, Johnsonville Sausage experienced tremendous growth in the 1980s, with sales 20 times that of the decade prior. With a new wholesale operation in the 1990s and distribution in 47 states, the second generation management team of Ralph C. Stayer, now President, and his sister Launa, was starting to feel the weight of everyone relying on them to make all decisions large and small, and it was becoming a roadblock to continued growth. They realized that they needed to engage additional people in managing the rapid expansion of the business, and decided to grow managers from within their existing organization.
The PI Management Workshop was an effective way of getting in front of people to create a ‘soft awareness’ of themselves and those around them. We have a tendency to see leadership in others but not as clearly in ourselves. The workshop provided the framework for people to identify where they fell in the spectrum of leader or manager, and reinforced that everyone has traits that allow them to lead.

Don McAdams, Director of Member Development and Training, Johnsonville Sausage

THE SOLUTION

Johnsonville Sausage recognized that they would need help identifying specific behavioral characteristics in their existing staff to find potential managers and future leaders. Ralph C. had learned of the Predictive Index® (PI) and encouraged members of Johnsonville’s leadership team to evaluate the system. According to Don McAdams, Director of Member Development and Training, Johnsonville’s management team was “intrigued” with the assessment, finding it “uncannily accurate.” After their strong endorsement, all the key senior managers, Ralph C. and Launa included, were formally trained in the Predictive Index system.

In addition to incorporating the Predictive Index system into their general management practices, Johnsonville Sausage also applied the PI in focused leadership initiatives. It became an established part of their “Learn to Lead” program – a nine month leadership program for first line managers, coaches and project leaders. The PI is used to identify each manager’s behavioral traits in relation to themselves and the overall team dynamics.

In a separate initiative, Johnsonville’s Customer Focus Team (mid-level managers and above) enrolled in the Predictive Index Management Workshop™ to better understand their leadership and management strengths and areas for growth. They used the PI data to quickly identify effective behaviors and ways in which they could add more value.

THE RESULTS

• Predictive Index is viewed as an invaluable component of Johnsonville’s comprehensive leadership programs; it helps managers identify and understand their own management and leadership styles.
• PI serves as a roadmap for enhanced teamwork, professional growth and organizational success.