

Building Success by Developing Effective Teams

TexasBank is a full service community bank with over 20 retail banking centers in North Central Texas, and employing over 560 people. Chartered as Merchants and Farmers National Bank in 1889, the bank grew steadily within Parker County, Texas. It was not until almost a century later that the bank saw dramatic branch growth and expansion of its geographic coverage. In 1986 the bank changed its name to TexasBank to better reflect its reach. By the mid 1990's, the bank retained an independent consultant to facilitate the development of an even broader strategic vision for the future.

The Challenge: Over the next three years, the bank's management team worked closely with the consultant to develop a mission statement and strategic plan. The core principle they defined -- "Commitment to Customer Service" --drove a mission statement that ultimately included phrases such as "strong customer relationships," "sense of community," and "retention of employees." Yet promises like these are often the hallmarks of unfulfilled mission statements.

To deliver on these promises, TexasBank knew that they needed to be confident they had the right people in the right positions, working in productive and supportive teams with clear goals. The consultant recommended the Predictive Index® (PI) as a tool to help accomplish this.

The Process: Maria Jones, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources for TexasBank, and CEO Vernon Bryant, were first to be trained in the Predictive Index process. They then truly understood what PI could do for the company. Using the tools they were provided through PI, they had an objective way to verify if the people they had in place were ideally suited for their positions. They were able to look at the future, and evaluate promotional opportunities based on the characteristics and behaviors exhibited. And then, more importantly, they defined who to bring in down the road to help grow the operation. With that knowledge to guide them, all employees were given the PI survey and close to 60 senior managers were fully trained in the Predictive Index.

To extend the value of PI into middle management, TexasBank introduced the "Predictive Leadership Series." This involved over 100 managers. The Predictive Leadership Series is a suite of one day solutions-based workshops that introduces PI and focuses on specific applications of the Predictive Index.

- "Personal Development Strategies" allowed managers to identify their own personal behavioral and professional assets, compare them to their job requirements, and devise strategies to bridge any gaps for greater success.
- "Building Teams" gave participants a practical process to establish a common purpose with specific objectives, to form a team with diverse, complementary behaviors, and to improve communication.

All lower and mid-level managers took several workshops and were encouraged right from the beginning to use PI in all aspects of their job.

In the banking industry there tends to be a division between the retail side of the business and the lending side. Mr. Bryant wanted to strengthen the communication between the two departments. To address this, he brought together

"TexasBank builds success for our employees by creating a positive environment that nurtures teamwork. The vision of TexasBank is simple. We focus on people. Our customers, employees, communities and shareholders are central to everything we do. We build success."

the Presidents and Operations Managers from each banking center for an intensive PI teambuilding workshop so they could discover their behavioral strengths in relation to each other, and build a strong, effective team. Mr. Bryant's premise was if senior leadership worked cohesively, the others members of the team would follow.

The Results: It has taken 1.5 to 2 years to fully implement PI within the bank. Ms. Jones states that "almost without exception, she has not found one manager that has been through training that doesn't feel that PI is having a positive effect on their team and the bank's performance."

These positive effects even extend into areas where the bank had previously been unable to institute change. For example, there was a department in the bank whose members all had very similar behavioral traits, particularly their high level of detail orientation and weaker communication skills. This created a lot of adversity within the group. TexasBank had tried several avenues of team building, never meeting with much success. The group then participated in a PI team building session, facilitated by their Predictive Index consultant, which allowed the members to recognize each other's behavioral strengths and to develop strategies to interact productively together. According to Ms. Jones, this group is "Finally going down the right road!"

TexasBank developed a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the Predictive Index and it's applications throughout the organization. Over 80% of the managers surveyed find PI to be "highly reliable" and are actively using the Predictive Index process for recruitment and selection, conflict resolution, team building, and more. In fact, PI has become such an integral part of the TexasBank culture that it is now part of their formal hiring evaluation process.

Financial institutions are known for their high turnover. Prior to using PI, TexasBank experienced rates as high as 30 to 40% which is reflective of the industry. Since bringing the Predictive Index process into the bank, there has been a favorable decline in turnover from year to year.

In summary, TexasBank's commitment is to having PI touch every part of the part of their organization is probably best reflected in their vision statement.