

CASE STUDY:

Workplace Personality Inventory II

Barry Burns, Senior Director of Human Resources,
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Success From the Ground Up

When Methodist Healthcare System in San Antonio, Texas, began staffing its new Methodist Stone Oak Hospital, it faced a daunting task. Many health care workers, particularly nurses, are in high demand and can have their pick of employers. And more than half the employees of newly built hospitals usually leave during the first year.

But Methodist wasn't simply looking for workers who would stay. It was seeking to build a culture of "Methodist Excellence"—health care workers who are both clinically skilled and customer-focused.

"We wanted people with a service-first attitude," says Barry Burns, the Senior Director of Human Resources for Methodist's Medical Center Hospitals. "It was the first time we had built a hospital from the ground up since 1963 and we wanted to do it right." To help find the best people, Methodist turned to Pearson's TalentLens group. Methodist already had a history of success with Pearson, using its assessments to hire top-flight managers and executives throughout the health care system. About a year before Stone Oak was built, says Burns, "we came to the realization that we weren't doing as good a job as we could in hiring leaders. People didn't want to be managers, or weren't prepared to be managers. There was a lot of turnover."

Methodist began using two Pearson tools. One was the Workplace Personality Inventory, a personality test that identifies important work styles that predict success, such as achievement and leadership

orientation. The other was the Watson-Glaser™ Critical Thinking Appraisal, which measures the ability to analyze information and come up with solutions. It helps identify people with good decision-making and problem-solving abilities. The results were phenomenal, says Burns. "I see a much higher caliber of leadership," he says. "We haven't made a bad choice." In addition, there's been virtually no turnover among the newly hired managers and executives throughout the system.

Methodist Stone Oak Hospital

When it came time to begin hiring for their Stone Oak facility, Methodist once again looked to Pearson. The Workplace Personality Inventory was chosen to help achieve "Methodist Excellence." Because the assessment identifies traits such as cooperation, dependability and concern for others, says Burns, "it really fit into the culture we were trying to build." Before the hiring process began, Pearson and the Methodist Stone Oak Hospital human resources team tested out the Workplace Personality Inventory to see whether it was right for the hospital. Pearson administered the assessment to 150 randomly selected employees from throughout the entire Methodist Healthcare System, from housekeepers to directors. At the same time, the managers of those employees did a "sister assessment" that rated and ranked their competencies. There was a very close correlation between how employees scored and how they were evaluated by their managers—and so Methodist had full confidence in the assessment tool, says Burns.

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During the hiring process, job applicants—half from within the Methodist system, half from outside—first filled out applications, and then were screened by recruiters. If they were found to have the technical skills and abilities needed, they were given the Workplace Personality Inventory and then interviewed by managers. Burns emphasizes that the Workplace Personality Inventory “was not used as a pass-fail test,” but was rather one of several tools that helped evaluate the job candidates. One of the great advantages of the test, says Burns, was that it identifies areas of possible concern, so that the manager conducting the interview can “drill down” to get a clearer picture. “If, for example, someone scores high in concern for others and low in independence, we might explore that in the interview,” he says.

“Methodist Excellence”

Methodist Stone Oak Hospital achieved its goal of hiring a team of high-quality employees who embody “Methodist Excellence.” And Burns says much of the credit goes to Pearson. The fact that there has been virtually no turnover so far “is absolutely unbelievable,” says Burns. Dean Alexander, the CEO of Methodist Stone Oak Hospital, calls the new employees “a phenomenal group.” Because prospective employees knew they had to take the Workplace

Personality Inventory, he says, they recognized that Stone Oak was setting high standards—and that actually helped attract high quality applicants.

Shortly after Methodist Stone Oak Hospital opened, the hospital was surveyed by the national Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, says Alexander. The commission gave high marks to its employees. “We’ve never toured a new hospital that surveyed as well as yours,” they reported. “Your facility was beautiful and impressive, but what really distinguished you was your team.” Burns praises the high quality and rigorous standards of the two assessments, and says the strong working relationship between Pearson and Methodist Healthcare played a critical role as well. “I know they want us to be successful, and that’s important. Our partnership with Pearson couldn’t be better.”

For an innovative health care system in Texas, building a hospital using the first ever “hospital of the future” design was just the starting point to success—it wanted to hire the best employees. Pearson’s TalentLens group helped make that happen.

THE MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Goals

- Staff a newly built hospital
- Hire and promote dynamic leaders throughout a 7,500-employee health care system

Challenges

- High demand for health care workers
- Lack of a method for selecting exceptional managers & employees

Solutions

- Workplace Personality Inventory
- Watson-Glaser™ Critical Thinking Appraisal

Results

- A cohesive team of highly skilled and customer-oriented employees
- Significantly higher quality of managers and executives
- Virtually zero turnover to date