



## **Children’s Home + Aid rallies team to grow 40% in revenue**

### ***Overview:***

Children’s Home + Aid is a child and family service agency that protects, educates and counsels more than 13,000 Illinois children, youth and families to overcome poverty, abuse and neglect through more than 80 programs, from foster care to youth services. Children’s Home + Aid is located in 70 counties in Illinois and has been in existence for over 130 years. It is headquartered in Chicago with 4 regions covering the state.

### ***The challenge:***

Children’s Home + Aid Human Resources staff began using the Predictive Index® 6 years ago from The Oliver Group for the use of employee selection. The Predictive Index® tool (PI®) measures the motivating behaviors and needs of individuals to help organizations optimize their people. The PI measures four primary factors that determine motivating needs of individuals: dominance, extroversion, patience, and formality. It provides self-awareness to individuals of their operating styles, and objective insights to organizations about their employees.

Hilary Freeman, VP of Agency Performance and Quality, said “the leadership team wasn’t taking advantage of the PI. Certain areas were using it, but our leadership team had a strong need for team building so we could rally more strongly behind our mission.” The leadership team consists mainly of high dominance, low patience individuals, which can create a very strategic, forward thinking team, but also a team with a propensity for conflict.

According to Terry Peek, SVP of Statewide Programming, “the leadership team had surfacing disagreements and conflict. We wanted to become more honest and direct with one another.” The team was having difficulties working together on initiatives. Said Sharon Tiknis, SVP of Development and Chief Development Officer, “the white elephant in the room was that we weren’t focused. We weren’t coming to any resolution on anything and moving on.” Amid changes and opportunities in the Illinois scene for child and family care, the agency wasn’t positioned well for expanding its services without a united leadership team working together.

Furthermore, Children’s Home + Aid wanted to ensure it had high quality supervisors leading engaged teams of employees to deliver on their mission. Says Greta Jones, VP of Human Resources, “we had conflict among our functional teams of employees working within the state, and we wanted a method to have our leaders coach employees working on the ground – to improve their engagement and quality of service by cutting back on the distraction of conflict.” The teams needed to reduce conflict, and the supervisors needed to learn how to facilitate the conflict resolution process.

### ***The process:***

Oliver Group consultants met with the full leadership team to discuss the uses of Predictive Index and how it could be used to improve the leadership team and other divisions within the organization. The leaders agreed that they needed a focus on team development so they could do the best work possible. Tony Smith, an Oliver

Group consultant and certified executive coach, led the process to implement Predictive Index driven team building and coaching throughout the organization.

“We started by reading the book *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni, and we reviewed the ways we weren’t functioning well. We created a rally cry in each area of the organization and the specific objectives we had with champions holding full responsibility for deliverables,” said Freeman.

“Using the Predictive Index training and the knowledge from the book, we were able to create a safe environment for our team and recognize why we couldn’t reach decisions or engage our people. We all got to see where PI could be used to help us resolve the issues that needed attention,” according to Anne Barclay, VP of Clinical & Community Services.

Children’s Home + Aid used Predictive Index for a leadership team building session and also incorporated it into their strategic planning processes. “We recognized how ineffective our meetings were and once we understood each other’s personalities, we were able to hold more structured meetings and competitive discussions,” said Nancy Ronquillo, President and CEO of Children’s Home + Aid.

At the staff level, Children’s Home + Aid rolled out Predictive Index as well. Tiknis said, “we started using the PRO for new hires, and looking at teams through the lens of the PI. When we had tension, we were then able to deal with it by understanding individual differences. PI was good for effectively building up our functional teams.” The supervisors are now trained in Predictive Index, and then they go through a coaching training to aid them in supervision.

Initially, there was some skepticism in the organization about the use of Predictive Index. “It feels revealing, like magic. It takes time for people to get comfortable with sharing this information on their personalities, but then they learn that their results aren’t good or bad,” said Lisa Pieper, Regional Vice President for the Central Region.

According to Pieper, “most people wonder how the PI will be used when they’re asked to take it. Then they see their results and wonder if they need to change. We had to make it clear to the organization that this is simply a process of sharing ‘who I am,’ and it’s not a negative or positive.”

### ***The results***

Children’s Home + Aid’s leadership team finally developed its rally cry and was able to grow considerably. “The strategy, common language and resultant rally cry we developed using the Predictive Index helped us to focus and make a major acquisition in 2012. Without a united team, we wouldn’t have been able to accelerate our growth as we have. We’ve grown 40% in revenue, from \$45 million to \$64 million in a year. The acquisition of another large agency only took us 2 weeks. We’ve been able to benefit tremendously, as have the children in the foster care organization that we acquired. We merged with the Youth Campus, instantly injecting \$5 million into our foundation, resulting in more cash and sustainability to keep services going for a state with ongoing foster care needs,” according to Frank Poremski, SVP and CFO.

According to Jones, with the growth of the organization and focused team, there is now a career ladder for people to climb, and Predictive Index has been vital as the headcount increased from 770 to 986 in only two years, helping to assimilate the combined teams and engage employees so they can concentrate on delivering on the mission.

The team development with PI has helped our functional teams to reduce conflict within our facilities. The leaders understand it and they can coach the individuals involved understand what it going on with an objective tool. “I’m getting more PI requests from the functional leaders than I can handle, and we’re working to ensure that we share the message of PI with them,” said Barclay, who works out of the Metropolitan Region Office. Children’s Home + Aid was able to address quality of supervision issues and conflict with the analytics provided by the Predictive Index.

Barclay stated that “using the PI is not only good within the organization, but it helps us to work in the community as well. We use Predictive Index to help us communicate better with school principals. It’s helped us to increase understanding about Children’s Home + Aid and how we can improve how we serve schools.”

According to Freeman, it was “invaluable to take our group chart of PI survey results to understand how to work with someone given my results and theirs—that minimized conflict so we could get something done.”

Said Freeman, “Predictive Index gives us a common language and permission to discuss our differences. Often we’ll say something like ‘there goes Greta’s low C’ when she is moving quickly on a project—it’s part of the dialogue now.”

Through the deliberate use of Predictive Index for team building and planning on both the leadership and the functional teams throughout the entire organization, Children’s Home + Aid was able to unite its staff in mission and enable the organization to reach consensus and grow strategically. This in result has created a more financially sustainable organization that is growing in order to meet the needs of its clients and serve the community.

**Children’s Home + Aid found improved results** on its employee satisfaction and staff supervision surveys. For the staff survey (Oct. 2012) the overall agency average for all questions increased by 4.4% to a 70% satisfaction rating (range was 50 to 83).

For the Supervision Survey (May 2013), the response rating increased on 15 of 16 questions (by 2.4% overall, average 4.10 on a 5 point scale) with a 5% increase in response to the question “my supervisor provides me with clear guidance and support.”