DHS utilizing Predictive Index® to improve workforce, job satisfaction

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is incorporating behavior assessments into its workforce management as additional tools to assist in achieving a range of development goals.

Following a competitive bidding process, DHS selected Predictive Synergistic Systems of Cranberry to provide a tool that analyzes potential work behavior and one that surveys what behaviors are desired for specific jobs. Utilizing the tools is part of the department's effort to improve organization performance, development and employee job satisfaction.

Specifically, DHS is beginning to use the company's Predictive Index® survey, which gathers information on both an individual's inherent behavior and short-term job behavior, and its Performance Requirement Options (PRO) – a survey to determine behaviors required of specific jobs.

DHS personnel who are managing use of the surveys, as well as Predictive Synergistic Executive Consultant Colleen Redshaw, emphasize that the Predictive Index® is neither an I.Q. test nor the ultimate determinant for any job placement or hiring. Rather, the results are to be used to ensure that a job is a good fit for a candidate; that a manager and/or employee understand more about each other and their needs to make work satisfying and productive; and that there is a plan for succession.

Above: A visualization shows the workplace spheres with which the Predictive Index® assessment can be used. It also shows how the assessment fits into broader organizational goals.

"The Predictive Index® is just one part of the process," said Lisa Ford, Manager of Business Operations in the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF). "Sixty percent of a job is whether an employee or candidate has the skills, experience and knowledge to do the job. Forty percent is, will they?"

Currently, Lisa and Stacey Tunie, Performance Improvement Analyst in the Office of Administrative and Information Management Services (AIMS), are working to implement the index and PRO in DHS offices with both contracted personnel and county employees. Many managers and supervisors, including all in

AIMS, have taken the Predictive Index®, and Colleen recently conducted a workshop in the Human Services Building (HSB) to explain the index, its results and the PRO to those who had taken the index.

Training and certification of DHS personnel as analysts of Predictive Index® results is ongoing. The analysts will help those who take the assessments to interpret the results.

Colleen said the Predictive Index® is based in math and science and has its roots in the military during World War II, when military personnel were trying to determine the characteristics of an accurate bomber pilot. After the war the index moved to the business world. "It identifies behavioral drives and motivating needs beyond experience and skills," she said.

The report generated by the assessment includes a graphic representation of inherent behaviors, behavior over the last 90-120 days and where the two intersect. The report also gives a narrative discussing strongest behaviors and how the person will manage and influence.

For example, one report stated that the individual taking the index "is a confident, independent self-starter" with a "distinctively faster-than-average" work pace. "She learns and takes action quickly. On the other hand, she will become impatient and restless working repetitively with routine details or structured work."

To manage this person successfully, she needs independence, flexibility and opportunities to learn, advance and take action on her own ideas. She also needs variety and challenge in her responsibilities, the assessment report said.

"A manager should look at results such as these and say, 'This is why she is frustrated. How can I manage her so that she is successful?" Stacey said.

"It's managing to improve performance," Lisa added. "It's 'I know what I need to do to help you do your job.' It's also, 'We can help each other.' "