

## CASE STUDY

# Teakdecking Systems

## Background

Teakdecking Systems is an anomaly in the marine decking and flooring industry. Whereas most of the company's competitors are small shops of 10 or fewer people, Florida-based Teakdecking Systems has grown to 120 employees, offering products and services both domestically and abroad. The company's diverse range of offerings and global footprint have helped insulate it from economic ups and downs—and made it one of the industry's most highly regarded teakdecking providers. Founded in 1983 and originally based in Sweden, Teakdecking Systems has expanded its services to include more technical offerings, including synthetic decking and digitized templates.

## The Opportunity

Richard Strauss is a veteran in the boating business, so when the opportunity to take the reins as President of Teakdecking Systems arose, he didn't hesitate. According to Strauss, the company's "stellar reputation" and "diversity" of products and services were easy selling points. However, once on board and in a leadership position, he quickly recognized another very different opportunity.

"Our founder ran the company his way. Then he brought in a president—my predecessor—for seven years, and he tried to emulate [the founder]," Strauss said. "I come on the scene, and I just have a different style. I don't like to micromanage. I like to set expectations and give people the right tools to do their jobs."

However, many of Teakdecking's employees had been there for decades. While obviously a testament to the company's dedication to its people and customers, this also meant most employees hadn't had another job or experienced any other style of leadership. For a company that's "slow to change," drastic shifts in leadership, company strategy, and culture could be jarring—and potentially erosive.

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*President of Teakdecking Systems*

## The Solution

Teakdecking Systems' Director of Human Resources Julie Pietrantonio and her team had been using The Predictive Index® Behavioral Assessment™ for three years to assess new hires.

"I haven't met a single person that has doubted PI and the results because I think when they get their PI profile, they're shocked at how it nails them," said Strauss. "I was totally amazed by the whole process. It was such a simple, fast test, but it nailed me."

When it came to strategic decisions, however, Teakdecking relied on other tools. The leadership team had previously worked with a consultant to set strategic objectives, so they sought his guidance in navigating

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the shift in leadership and defining the company's strategy. When he suggested the PI Design Solution, a tool he'd learned about through a PI Certified Partner, Strauss and Pietrantonio didn't hesitate to try it.

The senior leadership team completed a PI Strategy Assessment™ to define the goals they felt most strongly about pursuing and rank how confident they felt in being able to achieve them. Next, a PI Certified Partner led them through the results and facilitated a discussion on next steps as part of the Execute Strategy with Confidence workshop.

"We're going through a little bit of a culture change, and a lot of our objectives, initiatives, things that we want to do for next year fell into a quadrant of PI's model," Strauss explained. "Then we overlaid all of our PI profiles and we were 180 degrees opposite of where our objectives were."

"We were all surprised at the results and found out where we need to shore up some of our issues," said Pietrantonio.

Armed with clarity and self-awareness from the Strategy Assessment, the leadership team set out to plan a strategy they were aligned on and felt confident in executing.

## The Results

Since taking the Strategy Assessment and participating in the Execute Strategy with Confidence workshop, Teakdecking's leadership team is operating with more self-awareness than before. It's also more realistic about what it'll take to achieve its goals.

"It makes you more aware of what you need to do, how hard you need to work, what you need to overcome, who's going to do a better job at something than you thought," explained Strauss. "I think it was just very eye-opening."

The positive effects of senior leadership alignment and heightened self-awareness echo throughout the organization.

“We just did a survey with employees and one of the questions was, ‘Are you proud to work for Teakdecking?’ And the score was unbelievably high,” said Strauss. “It was all eights, nines, and tens, so people are very proud to work here. They definitely believe in the product and take a lot of pride in their work.”

As the company goes into a period of “focusing on the fundamentals,” the leadership team plans to continue incorporating PI into team building and strategy setting. Locking in a sound talent strategy and optimizing its people’s potential will set Teakdecking Systems up for future growth and continued category leadership.