



# CASE STUDY

ENHANCING RECRUITING  
WITH PROFILEXT®



Medical and Pharmaceutical Industry



GREAT LAKES PROFILES INC.  
HUMAN CAPITAL – GETTING IT RIGHT

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# ProfileXT®

## Healthcare Provider Enhances Recruiting with ProfileXT®



### AT A GLANCE

#### CHALLENGES:

- Fast-moving health care changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Patient perception of physicians
- Identifying and selecting the best fit for the culture

#### SOLUTION:

- Identify strengths of physicians who best fit the organization
- Recruit and select medical practitioners who are likely to keep patients coming back

#### RESULTS:

Doctors scoring at or **above** 82 percent overall match on the PXT to the peak performance pattern averaged 83 percent on a patient satisfaction survey. Those scoring **below** 82 percent averaged only 77 percent on the patient satisfaction survey.

With more than a century of strong healthcare experience, it would have made sense for a healthcare provider in Wisconsin to take a wait-and-see approach to the fast-moving health care changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Instead, the organization is leading the change by discovering what its customers say about their experiences and by mounting an effort to ensure ongoing patient satisfaction. Call it the organization's treatment plan for itself.

The healthcare system joined with assessment leader Profiles International in the first step of gauging how patients perceived physicians, or, as the director of medical staff services describes it, "learning what makes our doctors tick."

The multispecialty healthcare system offers its customers every medical service except for transplants. As one of the largest physician-owned health systems in the country, the organization provides a health plan that accounts for 45 percent of its patients. But leaders recognize that all of its customers can choose who treats them and where to obtain that treatment. So in 2008, it began a process that would help ensure that it recruits medical practitioners who keep patients coming back. It enlisted the help of Profiles, the assessment leader, and its ProfileXT® to add a dimension to physician selection.

### Company culture

Understanding the culture is a lesson in both science and soft skills. According to the director of medical staff services, the science is important because the physicians who own the system base their decisions on data and facts. Physicians must see the hard data before being convinced that a process will work. "We always have physicians at the table helping administrators in understanding what their needs are," the executive said. It is also important that *both* scientists and administrators are at the table so that doctors understand the importance of imparting more than medical expertise to their patients.

When medical staff recruiters decided they needed to find a way to select doctors well-versed in communication and other skills—not just medical brilliance—they knew they had to convince their own top doctors first. "The physicians bought into the process and saw value in it," the medical staff executive said. "The next part was doing random selection of our physicians

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based on various levels of patient satisfaction to determine, what makes the doctors tick and how to differentiate between candidates.”

In the process, medical staff recruiters discovered that it is easier to assess for the “hard” skills—clinical knowledge—than it is to discern the softer skills. “That’s where the gap exists,” the medical executive said. “People can talk the talk, but do we know their habits and traits?” Learning this was part of the process of figuring out how to become more effective in finding the right physicians.

Leaders met with Profiles in 2008 and chose the assessment organization partially because of Profiles’ willingness to share the results of its assessments. An executive also said that Profiles’ good reputation, customer support and pricing were attractive.

Ultimately, leaders decided to use the ProfileXT® which is a multipurpose assessment that organizations often use to help stop turnover. In this case, however, turnover was not the main issue. Recruiters wanted an assessment to help select physicians who best match the culture as it is currently and where it needs to be as the medical landscape changes.

## The organization’s background

Although the healthcare system has other strategic health care alliances, that was not always the case. The system began with one physician and a few of his colleagues, who worked out of a small office.

The community was small but growing, and the number of patients multiplied. The biggest changes over the decades involved building a new location, the primary facility, and moving toward medical specialization. Through mergers and new construction, the system grew to serve the population of cities and rural areas in multiple ways.

The main components of its current integrated system include:

- More than 500 physicians and more than 4,500 employees at 61 locations provide care to 450,000 patients across 18 counties in Wisconsin.
- A health plan with a combined member enrollment of 265,000 which makes it the largest managed care organization in Wisconsin.
- A foundation was created to sponsor and conduct health-related research and to help start public service and health education projects in the community.

## Immediate goals

Leaders have an immediate twofold goal: to understand the information from their patient satisfaction survey and to increase patient satisfaction overall. They understand that patient satisfaction is a primary driver for their physicians' success, and they want to know how they can hire the physicians who will ensure that patient satisfaction is a part of day-to-day operations.

"All of our patients have a choice, even those who use our health plan," the director of medical staff services said. "They have open enrollment every year if their employer offers that. Half of our patients are not health plan members. If they cannot get access to us or do not have a positive experience, they are going to walk down the street."

The importance of recognizing patient choice led the organization to conduct the patient satisfaction survey. Using direct survey questions, the survey questions patients quarterly to discover what competencies and behaviors they most want in their physicians.

The healthcare system uses a voluntary survey, the Clinician and Group Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers Survey, which is provided by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Leaders believe that survey participation will eventually be required for Medicare reimbursement and they want to know what their patients are saying. Participating in this rating also allows leaders to retrieve national benchmark data for similar healthcare systems. Administrators will be able to see how the organization measures up to others.

The survey asks these six questions about communication:

### In the last 12 months...

- How often did this doctor explain things in a way that was easy to understand?
- How often did this doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did this doctor give easy-to-understand instructions about taking care of these health problems/concerns?
- How often did this doctor seem to know the important information about your medical history?
- How often did this doctor show respect for what you had to say?
- How often did this doctor spend enough time with you?

In addition, the survey asks these five questions about access:

### In the last 12 months...

- When you phoned this doctor's office to get an appointment for care you needed right away, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you thought you needed it?
- When you made an appointment for a check-up or routine care with this doctor, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you thought you needed it?
- When you phoned this doctor's office *during* regular office hours, how often did you get an answer to your medical question that same day?
- When you phoned this doctor's office *after* regular office hours, how often did you get an answer to your medical question as soon as you needed it?
- How often did you see this doctor within 15 minutes of your appointment time?

The surveys told the administrators that the doctors are smart, well-educated and well-liked, but they also revealed that there were some physicians who weren't meeting the customer's expectations.

The medical services executive said that the surveys provided valuable information from the patients. The surveys told the administrators that the doctors are smart, well-educated and well-liked, but they also revealed that there were some physicians who weren't meeting the customer's expectations.

"It's no different from any of us going to a resort on vacation and evaluating how the staff treated us," the medical services executive added. "We want that seamless, high-quality patient care that is going to be delivered regardless of the title and the amount of money someone earns. The top issue for doctors is not only what I am saving people, but also patient satisfaction."

subjective view," the medical executive said. "All physicians may not be singing the praises of patient satisfaction, but they are starting to understand why it's important."

The executive said that the doctors understand this. "Sometimes it is hard for them to wrap their arms around it because the survey results are the patient's

## ProfileXT®

To begin its study of what makes its doctors “tick,” leaders chose a representative group of 54 doctors to take the PXT assessment. It had already conducted focus groups and surveys with patients to gauge their satisfaction with the doctors they had seen. Using PXT results, administrators built a “peak performance pattern,” using the results of the PXT assessment alongside the results of the survey.

### ➔ QUICK FACTS

**67 percent** of the top tier physicians who took the assessment scored 82 percent or above to the PXT peak performance pattern

**Only 25 percent** of the bottom tier physicians who took the assessment scored 82 percent or above to the PXT

The process took some time to complete, but because doctors willingly participated, the process was made easier. “When we started rolling it out, we used the medical directors as our initial pilot program participants,” the medical staff services executive said.

After establishing the peak performance benchmark, administrators put the ProfileXT® overall percentage match of each doctor to the benchmark side-by-side with the doctor’s patient satisfaction rating. The findings affirmed that the PXT would help find doctors more inclined to satisfy patients. Using the natural cutoff of 82 percent overall percentage match to the PXT, the results showed that:

- **67 percent** of the physicians who were in the top tier in customer satisfaction ratings scored 82 percent or above match to the PXT peak performance pattern.
- **Only 25 percent** of the physicians who were in the bottom tier in customer satisfaction ratings scored 82 percent or above to the PXT peak performance pattern.

Further results showed that doctors scoring at or above 82 percent overall match on the PXT to the peak performance pattern averaged 83 percent on the patient satisfaction survey. Those scoring below 82 percent averaged only 77 percent on the patient satisfaction survey.

“We believe the PXT can help us choose the right physicians more often by eliminating those who have the propensity to score below an acceptable rating in patient satisfaction,” the medical executive said.





### key takeaway

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### Summary

The findings were important because they showed no differences among doctors by specialty or age in terms of behavioral traits. However, behavioral differences do exist among physicians who excel in patient satisfaction and those who do not. “What we found was that among those who did well—those we created our benchmark with—their scores were based on such things as their energy levels and assertiveness,” the medical executive said. “There was no way we would have seen that just from conducting interviews.”

The findings were important because they showed no differences among doctors by specialty or age in terms of behavioral traits. However, behavioral differences do exist among physicians who excel in patient satisfaction and those who do not. “What we found was that among those who did well—those we created our benchmark with—their scores were based on such things as their energy levels and assertiveness,” the medical executive said. “There was no way we would have seen that just from conducting interviews.”

### What comes next?

According to the administrator, the next step is to use the PXT to assess the rest of the doctors. The system has hundreds of physicians in specialties ranging from allergy and anesthesia to urgent care and urology. Meanwhile, other professionals, such as psychologists and statisticians who understand psychometric results, are helping to verify that the PXT is not only valid but also trustworthy. “Our vice president of operations for The Office of Medical Affairs is a psychologist by training, and she was able to do the initial interpretation of the document and see that it is solid in how it is put together,” the executive said. “Knowing our physicians and how they look at assessments, it is helpful being able to send them the psychometric data.”

The medical executive also acknowledged that the use of assessments to recruit doctors is coming of age. At one professional group meeting he attended, demonstrations of how assessments work took center stage. This helped him decide on the PXT because of Profiles’ transparency in sharing results. “Another company did not want to share its psychometrics—they said it was confidential,” he said. “Profiles is very transparent, offers a huge amount of support and is well-recognized.”

Profiles’ approach to workplace issues helps the organization move forward with the PXT and encourages doctors and other employees to think about performance in a different way.

“Even when an organization makes more good hiring decisions than bad ones, hiring one wrong person is difficult on everyone. Dealing with people who do not fit the culture can create department-wide disruptions and contribute to both patient and staff losses.”

“We want to make sure we have the best information available to make the best decision to hire the best person for the position,” the executive said. “If there was something about a candidate that I can’t put my finger on, now I have a tool that helps me know what is going on.”

Leaders also want to reach out to other medical groups using the PXT to create benchmarks that build a helpful model for recruiting doctors. The executive said that there is a great interest in using the PXT to recruit physicians. He estimates the cost of hiring a new doctor at about \$75,000, not including the turnover cost. Recruiting new doctors using a search firm makes up about \$25,000 of that cost. “If we do it on our own, the cost is less, but the cost of turnover is huge,” the executive said. “Even when an organization makes more good hiring decisions than bad ones, hiring one wrong person is difficult on everyone.” Dealing with people who do not fit the culture can create department-wide disruptions and contribute to both patient and staff losses.

“Wrong” hiring decisions take up an enormous amount of time and energy and are a “huge, huge cost to the system,” the executive said. “By making more informed and reliable hiring decisions, we hope to spend less time managing problematic physician issues and more time positively reinforcing and mentoring our many stellar clinicians.”