

Commitment to Employee Development Results in Long-Term Growth and Success

Ulbrich Stainless Steels & Special Metals, Inc. is an international supplier of high performance alloys to a diversified marketplace that includes the aerospace, medical, automotive, and energy industries, and a wide range of consumer manufacturers. The company was founded in 1924 by Fred Ulbrich, Sr. in Wallingford, Connecticut, upon the same site that its major manufacturing facility operates today. Ulbrich remains a family run business and is currently in its second and third generations of senior management. Fred Ulbrich, Sr.'s sons, Fred Jr. and Richard, comprise the second generation and Chris Ulbrich and Mary Ulbrich Merlini comprise the third generation. Over the past 84 years, Ulbrich has expanded to become a mid-sized corporation, with facilities located world-wide.

The Challenge: The supportive work environment at Ulbrich results in low employee turnover. In fact, some employees (like the Ulbrich family) are multiple generation family members. Most management opportunities are filled from within. With this steady and skilled workforce and the company positioned for continuous growth, the professional development of Ulbrich's supervisors, managers and executives became a necessary investment in order to maintain the success of the business.

The Process: For over 20 years, the executive team used the behavioral assessment tool Predictive Index (PI) as a management strategy, providing key insights into aligning the right people with the right jobs, resulting in a positive impact on both the company and its employees. Mary Ulbrich Merlini, Vice President of Corporate Communications and Education, and daughter of Richard Ulbrich, joined the company in 1988. Her primary focus was to develop and strengthen the manager's "people skills" which included improved internal communication and employee professional development. During her training in PI, Mary immediately realized the additional benefits the Predictive Index could offer the organization beyond the executive ranks, especially for middle managers and supervisors. When Mary recommended to senior management expanding the usage of the PI to help these managers understand their own motivational and communication style of leadership, they agreed.

"Our future success depends on utilizing the best tools available, and for our people, that tool is the Predictive Index."

*Mary Ulbrich Merlini,
Vice President of Corporate
Communications and Education*

The knowledge from the training provided managers with information regarding what motivated their team for everyday productivity and success. Sharing the PI results with individual team members helped employees gain a better understanding of why they enjoy certain tasks/projects while not enjoying others, as well as why they may work well with one manager but not another. Communication increased significantly from their use of PI.

The Results: Ulbrich Stainless Steels & Special Metals, Inc. has surpassed many other steel companies by not only staying in business, but by experiencing growth. Ulbrich is strong today and continues to expand. At the recent groundbreaking ceremony for an expansion project at their main plant in Wallingford, CT, the Governor of Connecticut, Jodi Rell, acknowledged Ulbrich as a role model for businesses in the state of Connecticut. What makes them so successful? People. Ulbrich's commitment to the success and development of their employees and the employees' dedication to the company make them a company to admire.

Mary shares: "Ulbrich Steel's winning combination consists of marketplace strategy and commitment to aligning our people's talent to compelling work. Our future success depends on utilizing the best tools available, and for our people, that tool is the