

CASE STUDY

Find out how DocuSign uncovered the key to a great hire by focusing on talent strategy.

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Background

DocuSign is the industry standard for trusted digital transactions, with about 70% market share in the e-signature space. Founded in 2003, the company now has more than 500,000 paying customers — including Chevron, Bank of America, and AIG — across 180 countries. In 2019, DocuSign appeared on Glassdoor's Top 100 Places to Work list, as well as LinkedIn's list of the 50 Top Companies in the U.S., and was estimated to be worth \$25 billion. While DocuSign's success began with enabling customers to send digitally signable documents, the company has since acquired cloud platform SpringCM and broadened its capabilities..

The Challenge

"What I've always felt very strongly about is not just hiring somebody to fill the seat. I wanted to feel with passion and conviction that I had hired the perfect person."

Susan Ross Senior Director of Recruiting

DocuSign was at a turning point. Faced with a more accelerated growth curve than ever before, the senior leadership team set a goal of growing from 700 to 2,500 employees in just two years — an average of about 4 new hires every week. At the time, Senior Director of Recruiting Susan Ross had just joined the company and likened the environment to a car getting an oil and tire change while driving down the highway. Departments company-wide were experiencing high attrition rates, and most hiring decisions were made on gut instincts.

"It was a free-for-all. We didn't have a recruiting process in place and we were growing really, really quickly," Ross recalled. "We were just hiring people who looked good on paper or connected with that hiring manager, but that doesn't have a lot of objectivity to it. So I started looking into different technologies and processes around hiring."

The Solution

As she began investigating various hiring tools, Ross remembered taking The Predictive Index® PI Behavioral Assessment™ at a previous job and receiving accurate, scientific results — results other assessments couldn't offer. She introduced PI to upper management and, after securing funding from the Senior Vice President of Sales, immediately introduced PI to the hiring process.

"What I've always felt very strongly about is not just hiring somebody to fill the seat," Ross said. "I wanted to feel with passion and conviction that I had hired the perfect person." She kick started her search with the most critical role: account executives, who drive \$1 million in annual revenue.

The DocuSign executive team reviewed top performers and created a PI Job Assessment™ based on their behavioral profiles. This mapped prospective candidates against the Job Target to objectively determine if they fit the daily demands for the role. Once candidates made it to the interview phase, the team utilized PI Interview Guides to probe for behavioral gaps and potential problem spots. Each quarter, Ross and the recruiting team recalibrated the Job Assessment; with such rapid growth, they wanted to ensure they were assessing each round of new hires according to the current top performers. The purposeful implementation paid off and in just a year, Ross's team distributed 900 PI Behavioral Assessments and hired 250 successful sales executives and representatives.

The Results

**21%**

Increase in sales-team performance

As rapid progress toward DocuSign's aggressive hiring goal continued, Ross wanted to show how PI was not just helping them hire, but also helping build a sustainable talent pipeline. So she initiated an informal validity study using over 50 salespeople's PI profiles. The results could not have been clearer: More than a fifth of individuals' quota attainment was related to their behavioral drives.

DocuSign used the PI Behavioral Assessment to identify top performers and optimized their sales team to achieve a 21% increase in performance, while also seamlessly adding 1,800 employees.

"I wanted to prove that a [behavioral] pattern was a significant predictor of sales performance," Ross explained. "And with this validity study, I was able to say just that." She found salespeople who were more extraverted and informal in their approach had better quota attainment, and the relationship between these traits — as indicated by their PI patterns — was an indicator of just how successful they would be. In fact, each marker on the reference profile accounted for a 13% difference between quota attainment expectations.

By adding PI to the recruiting process:

- DocuSign's problem of high attrition disappeared; new hires felt comfortable in their positions and were more engaged as a result.
- The sales team experienced a 21% increase in performance after using top performing employees as a behavioral benchmark.
- The company fluidly and successfully grew from 700 to 2,500 employees in less than three years.

With PI, Ross quickly and procedurally introduced a process that allowed her team to assess candidates against high performing employees. This not only provided consistency and confidence in the hiring process, but also set her up to optimize talent in DocuSign's pipeline.

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Company details, roles and results reflect the original case study.

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