

Pratch & Company

Insights From Our Clients

“It's one thing to be precise about how someone has functioned in the past. It's another to make accurate predictions about how someone is likely to function in the future. Leslie really understands our needs. She's a terrific value-add.”

Brian Simmons, Managing Partner
Code, Hennessy & Simmons

“Ten years ago, I was fortunate to have Leslie assess me when I was the CFO of Tower Automotive. The insights she provided enabled me to work more effectively with Tower's board of directors and senior executives. Subsequently I came to rely on Leslie for the development of my own staff.

“Tower also used Leslie as a second pair of eyes to examine the leadership teams of acquisitions we were targeting. She became an integral element of our due diligence. Not only did Leslie's insights help strengthen our own leadership; they also help us to make more profitable acquisitions.”

Anthony Barone, Executive Vice President
RHJ International SA

“For the past five years we have relied on Leslie for psychological due diligence on prospective executives before closing a deal. Her assessments of how prospective CEOs are likely to function when under stress have proved to be dead-on accurate. We use her assessments to guide our investment decisions.”

Rich Lobo, Partner
Code Hennessy & Simmons

“We were recently faced with the need to recruit a new CEO for one of our most promising portfolio companies. The job was further complicated in that we felt that an outsider was needed in the role; thus adding another level of risk to a challenging situation. Leslie's insightful work helped us bridge the gap of knowing the finalists far better than we could have through countless interviews. The work also gave us a head start in our coaching of the new manager.”

John Willis, Managing Partner
Willis Stein & Partners

“Leslie provides incredibly accurate and valuable insights into the abilities of our managers. Her perceptions and suggestions accelerate the partnerships we develop with a new manager and help assure a more successful relationship out of the gate.”

David Hawkins, Partner
Code Hennessy & Simmons

“Leslie Pratch has the unique ability to assess from multiple perspectives the capabilities of business leaders and to isolate those individuals who can achieve the company’s desired results. I have benefited greatly from Leslie’s ability to align individual capabilities to particular roles and companies. I believe her effectiveness is a result of her educational groundings and her personal intellect, compassion, and drive to be the best. Leslie has also counseled me on a personal basis, providing insights in an actionable manner. She conveys information on multiple levels – from the practical to the theoretical – and always ensures understanding.”

Bruce Greinke, Former Subsidiary President
Inland Steel Industries

“We have tried other assessment professionals in the past but found that when pressed to defend their interpretation of a candidate’s personality dynamics they seemed to modify their findings to fit what they sensed we wanted to hear. That is not an issue with Leslie – her assessment is thorough, detailed and thoughtful, and when she presents her findings she is definite and certain, she very confidently and effectively handles any skepticism we might express and holds her ground.”

Avy Stein, Managing Partner
Willis Stein & Partners

“The insight and depth of understanding of Leslie’s assessment surpasses what I have encountered in executive development programs at AlliedSignal and what I have encountered in working with other executive team development consultants. She sharpened how I work with investors and key subordinates. Leslie’s insights are guiding how I build and manage my team.”

Bryan Livingston, CEO
Baker Tanks

“Leslie’s assessment of my coping ability revealed to me areas where I was strong and areas where as a result of cultural differences, I could improve. In today’s global economy, it is important for entrepreneurs to not stub our toes on practices which differ from country to country. Not only does Leslie bring her psychological and business insights to helping us understand how we can better perform, she is knowledgeable about entrepreneurship, the times we live in. I recommend her counsel highly.”

Raj Alur, Chief Marketing Officer
Deeya Energy

“Because of Leslie’s assessment, I have become much more aware of my personal strengths and management style. This has helped me to become a more effective executive, channeling my energies and experience into a more productive outcome.”

Fred Hipp, CEO
AMF Bowling

“Our firm has worked with Leslie Pratch over several years on multiple acquisition-related projects. Her insights are incremental to our traditional sources of management due diligence (including reference checks and background checks). We have used Leslie both to assess individual managers, as well as an entire team.

“Understanding the roots of an individual's personality, their motivations, tendencies and fit within a team, are invaluable. Leslie's assessments have been very reliable in our experience. Ultimately, management is critical to the success of any investment, and understanding the team and how to best work with them is essential. Leslie has been super-helpful to our investment process.”

Tom Formolo, Partner
Code Hennessy & Simmons

“Over the past 37 years, I have been exposed to many executive development programs including The Management Grid, Quality Circles, Six Sigma, One Minute Manager, What Really Works, and many others. I have also been through Leslie's assessment approach and it is rigorous, insightful, professional and fun to experience.

“Leslie can be an excellent catalyst in helping put together or strengthen a management team. I believe her approach can also be a valuable tool to evaluate existing or potential candidates for your management team or staff. The insight that can be achieved by candidates or existing executives is not only complete, but I think it will help build cohesiveness, professionalism and integrity in your organization.

“I recommend that you first go through the evaluation yourself to determine the validity of the approach and the thoroughness. Then I believe the decision will be evident. ”

Travis White, Semi-retired former semiconductor CEO/President
Current director of several public and privately-held companies

“I found it extremely helpful to have Leslie assess existing and prospective members of my leadership team (a spin out from Aon). Her assessments gave me insights into the specific direction and support team members needed. She also helped me understand the cultures of companies I was contemplating acquiring to see if there was a fit. Leslie’s assessments are the most powerful I have seen in Corporate America.”

Jerry Nanna, Former CEO, Abercrombie & Fitch; EVP, Global Strategic Marketing
Aon Corporation

“Pratch & Company has been extremely valuable to us as we work with the management teams of our portfolio companies. The assessment process is particularly helpful to our CEOs as they recruit additional members to their management team. We have had CEOs excited about their own development plans, as well as their management team development plans, after meeting with Leslie. We have better management teams that function at a higher level because of their involvement with Pratch & Company.”

Blaine Crissman, Partner
Prism Mezzanine Fund

“As a senior executive of a major automotive supplier, Tower Automotive, I had the privilege of working with Leslie Pratch for approximately three years. Leslie’s depth of understanding of the dimensions of business leadership goes far beyond psychological profiling. When Tower Automotive acquired the Automotive Products operation of A. O. Smith in 1997, I assumed the leadership role for integrating the acquired organization. This activity consisted of changing a 100-year corporate culture from hierarchical to value-based team structure. Leslie assessed key members of the senior management team of the acquired company to determine whether they were capable of leading change in a manner that would support the values of Tower Automotive.

“As an additional activity, Leslie assisted in developing a Business Unit Assessment to fit the right type of business unit leader with the demands of a particular business unit. Leslie recognized that the style of leadership should be matched to the business environment. Some business units needed nurturing while others required a command and control approach. Leslie made a significant contribution to the successful integration of this acquisition.

“Leslie’s combined skills as a clinical psychologist and as a business strategist make it easy for senior leadership to collaborate with her on unique issues. Leslie provided valuable input to Tower Automotive leadership for developing a process for acquisition integration and succession leadership development.”

James Lozelle, Former Director and Audit Committee Chair
Tower Automotive

“Prism has routinely used Pratch & Company for the evaluation of key managers for new investments and existing portfolio companies. Pratch & Company’s rigorous evaluation approach has provided us with a roadmap for working with our senior executives and enabled us to better understand their strengths, weaknesses, and probable reactions in stressful situations. Leslie knows our business and spends a significant amount of time understanding the fit between an executive and the opportunity. As a result, our ability to hire and retain high-performance executives, and to weed out those who simply tell a good story, has dramatically improved.”

John Hoesley, Partner
Prism Fund

“Leslie assessed six members of the executive team of one of my portfolio companies, with whom I had worked for eight years. During that period of time the company had grown from annual revenues of \$3MM to over \$100MM. She provided the Board, and the CEO with an understanding of the individual capabilities and competencies of six members of the company’s senior management team. Leslie got from the CEO a very clear, specific idea of how he would like the firm to evolve over the next three years. She also discussed with him and other members of the board of directors the organization structure and management team capabilities and roles. She then conducted in-depth psychological assessments of the capabilities of the CEO and his direct reports. For four of these individuals, she augmented the psychological assessments with 360-degree feedback. Her feedback included insight into each executive’s development and was intended to shape our thinking and decision making about these issues.

“Leslie’s reports were spot on. I was impressed by the accuracy and depth of insight of Leslie’s evaluations, particularly given my intimate knowledge of the team and its history. Her feedback helped the CEO and Board make decisions regarding the organization structure going forward, including demoting one executive, and grooming another to succeed the CEO.

“The 360-degree feedback was particularly useful to the executives who had it, as the observations and suggestions for improvement by their peers, superiors, and subordinates were more easily accepted and implemented when couched in their already trusting relationship with Leslie, who imparted to them an understanding of their personality structure and dynamics. I highly recommend the coupling of 360-degree feedback with an in depth psychological assessment to increase an executive’s acceptance and understanding of 360-feedback and to enable that executive to put together a developmental plan to improve on the areas of development noted in the 360 process.

“Moreover, I have used substitute services in the past. Leslie’s far outstripped those services in the level of insight and value added.”

George Spencer, Managing Director
Seyen Capital

“Leslie’s 360-process is one of the most beneficial developmental processes I’ve been through relative to feedback from board members, peers, individuals I report to, and those who report to me. I’ve had a half-dozen or so 360s in my career, and the information was never synthesized to the extent it was with Leslie’s. By going through the process, I was able to identify three substantive areas of behaviors to work on that were consistently linked to the critical feedback. These areas are part of a plan for my development into CEO, with specific action steps and measures. Respondents trusted that Leslie would maintain their confidences while communicating important feedback to me. Her interviews brought out the sentiments and specific meanings of what lay behind the written comments, which were usually only a few short sentences.”

Greg Wagner, Former President of North American Operations
Tower Automotive

“My experience with Leslie Pratch was very positive. I found her leadership assessment methods to be more insightful and more comprehensive than traditional assessment methods. Of special value to me was the follow-up review where the assessment served as a strong development tool. Leslie pushed me to recognize and take advantage of my strengths while at the same time understanding my deficiencies. Her approach has been beneficial to me personally and professionally. I strongly recommend the use of her services for important personnel and organizational issues.”

David M. DeBoer, CEO
Bepco

“Leslie’s assessment about how I function and what my motivations are clarified my thinking about setting new goals. I have built several successful businesses, as a CEO and as a venture capitalist. Leslie helped me to better understand my values and how they would shape my future opportunities in life. With this clarification, my decisions are more in tune with what I value.”

Bo Peabody, Managing General Partner
Village Ventures

“Leslie's methods and analysis were very thorough and great cause for introspection. Her constructive advice was most helpful, and well worth the time and money.”

Peter Thompson, Chief Executive Officer
Perkins Investment Management, LLC

“Leslie contributed in a very significant way to establishing the process by which we hire executives for our portfolio companies. Thanks to her, we now have a much better understanding of respective executive roles and how to assess whether a prospective executive is likely to fulfill respective demands. Leslie’s thinking has been integral to how we think about how we add value as venture capitalists.”

Martin Steinmann, Former Partner
Vesbridge Partners

“Leslie really makes the effort to understand your company's culture and values. This adds greatly to the value of her assessments. I found Leslie's assessment of my own leadership style to be so constructive that I had her assess my key subordinates. As a result, our team was far more productive and focused than I had ever thought possible.”

David Tice, Former Senior Vice President of Engineering
Tower Automotive

“It is critical for us to hire people who have a high probability of being successful and happy at our company. I think of her assessment process as a way of fast-forwarding my knowledge of a candidate, beyond an initial impression.”

Tom Boyce, Former CEO
Wisconsin Paper (now part of Lindenmeyr-Monroe)

“A CEO hire in a leveraged environment is a critical factor in a successful investment. Leslie is able to assess and analyze the capabilities and potential for future success of our senior managers. The process provides us an independent assessment to determine if we have the right person for the investment opportunity and how best to work together from the beginning.”

Jason Duzan, Managing Director
Glencoe Capital, Michigan Opportunities Fund

“Leslie’s assessment showed me my strengths in active coping. The understanding she helped me achieve enables me to make better decisions. I am a more capable CEO of a dynamic, publicly traded company because Leslie’s assessment helped me appreciate my strengths as an executive.”

Joe Jachinowski, Former CEO
IMPAC Medical Systems (now part of the Elekta Group)

“We have found the analytical tools used by Pratch & Company to be unique and effective at identifying potential issues with management, which are often different from those we uncover through the management interviews we conduct. The additional diligence is well worth having as part of the investment management process.”

Bill Harlan, Partner
Prism Mezzanine Fund