

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE® SUCCESS STORY

HARNESS LEADERSHIP HELPS GUIDE CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP TO SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

CLIENT

Citizens Energy Group
Indianapolis

CONSULTING PARTNER

Harness Leadership
Indianapolis



THE PARTNERSHIP

CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP

A 130-year old Public Charitable Trust delivering broad-based utility services through cross-functional collaboration and teamwork among its energy operations, water operations, and shared services functions

1200+ professionals, serving approximately 800,000 people and thousands of businesses in the greater Indianapolis area

Honored with four J.D. Power Awards for customer satisfaction—concurrently in 2011 and 2012

HARNESS LEADERSHIP



Led by Principal Renee Harness, whose pioneering expertise in leadership development helps customize initiatives that drive cultural transformations.

- A 20-year career as consultant, trainer, and coach developing leaders at Charles Schwab, Roche Diagnostics, Citizens Energy Group (since 2012), and others
- Personally mentored by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, creators of The Leadership Challenge®
- Co-author of *The Leadership Challenge Values Cards* and *The LPI Action Cards*; contributor to The Leadership Challenge, 4th and 5th editions
- Certified Master and mentor of The Leadership Challenge
- Developer and Facilitator of The Leadership Practices Inventory® Coach Training

FRAMEWORK & TOOLS

Grounded in 30+ years of research, **The Leadership Challenge®** and the **Leadership Practices Inventory®** assessment—used by more than 5 million people worldwide—is a clear, evidence-based path to achieving the extraordinary. Abstract leadership concepts become easy-to-grasp Practices and behaviors that anyone can learn and turn into immediate action.



DELIVERING RESULTS THAT MATTER

The expertise and guidance of Harness Leadership, along with the powerful tools of The Leadership Challenge®, help Citizens Energy Group achieve its vision of serving its customers and the Indianapolis community with unparalleled excellence and integrity.



For decades, Citizens Energy Group has led the way in providing the foundation for a healthy, economically viable Indianapolis community. With its environmental stewardship, civic involvement, and long-term focus on safety, reliability, and growth, this diverse utility service company has consistently demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of life of its employees, customers, and others throughout the greater metropolitan area—now and for future generations. And from its pioneering beginning to today, solid leadership has enabled Citizens to fulfill that commitment.

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS MAKE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS POSSIBLE

Change has come swift and often to Citizens: mergers and acquisitions, shifts in manufacturing and distribution, and challenging customer expectations as economic times changed. But, a solid focus on its mission and vision, firmly grounded in leadership excellence, have seen the company through each transition and kept it moving toward a new future. When the company's 2011 acquisition launched, for example—taking on the city's water and wastewater assets and the 400 employees who came with it—Citizens took action right from the start to ensure that the integration was a success. With strong leadership at every level, beginning at the top with then-President and CEO Carey Lykins, Citizens incorporated the basic tenets of The Leadership Challenge while setting out a clear vision, launching an ambitious communication strategy, and actively involving all stakeholders in the process.

AND THE RESULT?

- 400 new employees successfully integrated and a thriving culture sustained
- Significantly expanded public outreach and customer service capabilities
- Increased transparency, and combined billing and call center functions

“What we learned during this monumental transition is that leadership is foundational,” Jodi Whitney, Vice President, Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer, said.

“You cannot wait until change is going to occur to start leadership training or start preparing leaders for the next phase. Our leaders were prepared to step up and do what they needed to do because we already had a very focused approach that was based on The Leadership Challenge® and The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®.”

The company brought in Renee Harness, of Harness Leadership, to begin to more deeply integrate leadership into the essence of the company's transforming culture. With The Leadership Challenge as a foundation, Harness Leadership and Citizens launched their partnership with a clear focus on individual leadership development through executive coaching and a classroom learning experience. They engaged senior leaders in one-to-one coaching around the powerful LPI: Leadership Practices Inventory® assessment, and in establishing strategic goals that would set the agenda for these leadership development efforts. This leadership group then came together for The Leadership Challenge® Workshop experience, diving into how The Five Practices could propel the organization's massive culture integration initiative forward.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PARTNERS— KEY TO DRIVING ONGOING CULTURE CHANGE

Sustained culture change is possible only when values are aligned, actions and behaviors demonstrate those values, and there is a shared understanding and a common language around what it means to be a leader—this is at the heart of The Leadership Challenge.

Throughout the integration, The Five Practices were kept front-and-center. Citizens' leaders led using the Practices. That proven framework also clearly set the stage for developing leaders at every level as the company moved to take the concepts and Practices of The Leadership Challenge down even deeper—to the everyday actions and behaviors exemplary leaders exhibit when they are performing at their very best. To help achieve that goal, for example, Citizens embedded The Leadership Challenge Workshop and various tools into its training curriculum, along with essential leadership messages such as:

- “People follow first the person, then the plan” **(MODEL THE WAY)**
- “The vision is the force that invents the future” **(INSPIRE A SHARED VISION)**
- “The work of the leader is change—the best leaders are the best learners”
(CHALLENGE THE PROCESS)
- “Exemplary leaders strengthen everyone’s capacity to deliver on the promises they make” **(ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT)**
- “Encouragement is, curiously, serious business” **(ENCOURAGE THE HEART)**

“This shared language of leadership really set the stage for the next phase of developing exemplary leaders—at every level, in every division,” Sandy Dean, Senior Manager of Organizational Development, said. “It became a significant part of the way we talk about leadership and truly helped every leader be accountable for the continued evolution of our culture.”

Harness Leadership continued to support Citizens' Organizational Development team through this new phase. Together, this dynamic partnership focused on bringing The Leadership Challenge Workshop to all directors and managers, and training internal coaches to help leaders keep the LPI behaviors essential to strategic business goals alive. They also created The Leadership Challenge® Refresher Course, using The Five Practices as a framework. With customized materials and an in-classroom experience, important LPI concepts and the key behaviors critical to meeting daily challenges as well as future business imperatives were reinforced. Executives and directors dove deep into the key behaviors that define expectations of how they show up in the Citizens workplace. Leaders also completed a reassessment of the LPI, and follow-up coaching helped ensure that each had a detailed plan of action to improve their leadership effectiveness.

CITIZENS ENERGY GROUP CHALLENGES TO EXCEL

**Massive culture change is hard.
Legacy processes can be difficult to abandon.
Pockets of resistance can be difficult to crack.**

With internal expertise up and running, Citizens advanced The Leadership Challenge forward, continuing to spread The Five Practices language throughout the organization and coaching leaders on how to live the important LPI behaviors each day. When confronted with new challenges in 2016, Harness Leadership answered the call to help continue to develop Citizens' dynamic culture and focus its shared vision on the journey to excellence.

Together with internal Organizational Development experts and select executive leaders, Harness Leadership helped create and implement Leading from the Future, an intensive one-day workshop focused specifically on LPI behaviors linked to the essential Practice of Challenge the Process. They clearly laid out the Challenge the Process expectations of what was required of leaders as individuals and for how they were to create a Challenge environment. They continued to mine the rich content contained in The Leadership Challenge materials to create a customized Challenge Audit that tasked Director-level leaders with identifying areas for improvement and creating an action plan to further develop those skills critical to keeping the business focused on innovation and containing costs.

“Unlike many clients I have worked with to implement The Leadership Challenge, Citizens stands apart in the way it has consciously turned the LPI into a tool for long-term, sustained culture change,” Renee Harness said. “Citizens’ experience, I think, clearly demonstrates that if you take the power of the LPI down to the behavior level—and leaders fully embrace those targeted behaviors that align with business needs—you can elevate the impact not only on individual leaders but on the entire organization.”

DEVELOPING LEADERS AS AN ONGOING PROCESS—NOT A ONE-TIME EVENT

At Citizens, nearly 100 managers have now participated in The Leadership Challenge experience. All new managers—whether promoted from within or new hires—are introduced to the company’s foundational leadership philosophy through The Leadership Challenge Workshop. The organization recently launched its CLASS (Citizens Lean and Six Sigma) program focused on continuous improvement (and Challenge the Process) with The Leadership Challenge fundamentals at its core.

To embed The Leadership Challenge even more deeply into the fabric of the organization, The Five Practices are integrated into Citizens’ performance management system. Leaders company-wide also utilize insights from the LPI as trusted resources that can be adapted to help them successfully meet each new business challenge and opportunity that comes along.

“The values of The Leadership Challenge are so closely aligned with our culture at Citizens that it was an easy decision to make this a flagship program in our leadership development repertoire. We embraced the concepts early and after many years this evidence-based, proven framework continues to be invaluable in providing a clear language across all divisions of how we expect our leaders to lead.

The effectiveness of The Leadership Challenge, however, is only one part of why our longstanding partnership with Harness Leadership remains so fruitful. More importantly, it is Renee herself and the deep knowledge of leadership development and professionalism she brings to the table. Renee’s personal drive to excel and to bring out the very best in every leader at Citizens continues to help us meet the leadership challenges of today and prepare us for the future.”—Sandy Dean

ISN'T IT TIME TO TRY THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS?

Contact Renee Harness at 317-489-3335 or renee@harnessleadership.com.



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