

Republic Services and EI: Turning Waste into Efficiency & Profit!

Republic Services, based in Phoenix Arizona, is the second largest provider of solid waste collection, transfer, recycling and disposal services in the nation. Delivering reliable, competent service—every time—is mandatory in this highly competitive industry.

Focusing her team's energy and resources on creating efficiencies and increasing profitability, this year, Nan Opheim, Director IT, led a comprehensive audit of InfoPro, a legacy IT application which serves 6,500 employees across the country in four regions. The news was both good and bad. The good news, Nan stated, "The system is so smart on its own and works for us. We don't need more spreadsheets and steps in our process." The bad news: "Our employees were not allowing the system to work for them!" This translated into inconsistent data and erratic reporting. Despite being standard in the company for over 20 years, the application was consistently underutilized resulting in losses system wide.

The Goal: To achieve durable processes throughout every division of the organization that produce measurable results using standard metrics and best practices. Nan knows once she can measure what is happening in the regions, she can make recommendations for change to ultimately achieve greater efficiency and increase profitability.

The Vision: Create an internal culture of communication, understanding, and accountability; based around the belief that when people care about something personally and can see the benefit in it for them, they are more likely to change their behavior.

The Plan: To find and train 400 volunteers across the company, approximately 100 per region, called InfoPro Advocates, who fully understand the benefits of InfoPro and can promote best practices within their own divisions.

The Challenge: How can Advocates facilitate change without authority? Advocates were selected from all levels of the organization: customer service representatives, billing specialists, dispatchers, office managers, and others. Nan said, "They're the ones that care. They want to make a

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difference.” However, their involvement in the program is purely voluntary and although they have influence, they commonly have little or no authority in relation to the team members to whom they would ultimately be promoting InfoPro best practices. Occasionally, they might have to counteract nearly 20 years of incorrect routines.

Enter EI! Working closely with Nan, the Effectiveness Institute developed a custom program based on the four hour Understanding Behavior Styles (UBS) model. During the launch of the new initiative, Republic Services sought out to equip their Advocates with every tool possible for success, and the UBS born program delivered! In early May, Tom Champoux delivered the custom Understanding Behavior Styles program to eight Regional Business System Analysts (RBSAs) – certified trainers who began facilitating InfoPro Boot Camps in June 2012 focusing on systems, processes and communication to their Advocacy volunteers. By helping Advocates recognize and understand the Behavior Styles and subsequent needs of others in their workforce, the customized People Skills introduction makes it easier for them to effectively influence change.

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