

RI CLIENT PROGRESS STORY

Municipal Utility

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Changing the way the world does business, one relationship at a time.



A municipal water leader strengthens its leadership capacity...

The history of successful growth in the city and its surrounding communities is inextricably linked to the development of the region's magnificent water system. The company founders understood the need to build a world class infrastructure that anticipated regional growth and were bold enough to deliver on that vision.

While a bit different, the challenges company managers and staff face today are as dramatic as those their predecessors encountered over 75 years ago. The company is now focused on maintaining and replacing an aging infrastructure and doing so in the midst of an EPA consent decree, a global financial crisis and an exodus of a seasoned utility workforce. The company has addressed these challenges thoughtfully but aggressively. To start, a comprehensive strategic plan was developed that clearly articulated the organization's vision and goals. Next, an organization-wide reengineering effort was initiated to build the processes and organization necessary to execute a large and complex work program. To ensure that the work program is carried out in a productive, compliant, and service-focused manner, a project was initiated to strengthen the organization's leadership capacity.

The company deployed the Relationship Impact Performance Process and started by working to increase the leadership capacity of the executive team. This was a foundational step in the approach as it served as a catalyst to improve the relationships among the members of the executive team. With this as a model for the rest of the organization the RI Performance Process was implemented across the organization with the management teams from operations, customer service, engineering, and finance. The next stage in the process is to integrate the RI model into the company performance management practices – i.e., hiring, performance evaluations, succession planning.

"I've been involved in many leadership programs and this is the most impactful approach I've ever seen. In short order we have seen dramatic improvement in relationships across the Company."
Chief Executive Officer

Challenge: Strengthen the leadership capacity of the organization in order to manage a dramatically increased work program.

Solution: Introduced the Relationship Impact Performance Process which includes RI assessments, team workshops, and coaching.

Results: The executive team, department teams, and cross-functional work teams are supported in the development of their relational competencies. The RI approach is incorporated into all HR practices (i.e., succession planning, performance management, hiring). All of this work enhances the level of collaboration, commitment, efficiency and overall work experience of the organization.

The RI Performance Process is a dynamic approach that is centered on the theory that individual leaders are only as effective as their relationships with their direct reports, peers and managers. RI focuses on developing the relational competencies of individuals and teams with the intent of strengthening an organization's leadership capacity. Our team workshops start by affirming individual capabilities and raising awareness of relational challenges. Team members provide each other with feedback and develop practical skills and improvement plans. As needed RI consultants provide on-going coaching and mentoring to individuals and teams.

The company's use of the RI Performance Process approach has yielded significant results and is on its way to dramatically changing the organization's culture. A new language has emerged that is reinforcing the ability of teams to work more collaboratively and effectively to manage the complex and growing workload. The company's Chief Operating Officer commented that "ever since we initiated the RI approach, conflict has become more productive and people seem to enjoy being at work more."

