

An Arbinger Success Story: Idaho National Laboratory



The Story of Idaho National Laboratory

Idaho National Laboratory started to implement the Arbinger Principles 18 years ago looking to create a more unified organization and a healthier company culture. INL is one of ten multiprogram national laboratories owned by the U.S. Department of Energy, working to “change the world’s energy future.” With close to 5,000 employees and an 890-square-mile work site, INL is the largest of the ten labs. Because of the magnitude of the organization, finding a universal way to connect with all those people becomes increasingly difficult. Especially with the switch to remote work over the last year and a half.

Building Culture with Arbinger

The team at INL has been using the Arbinger tools to manage conflict, engage employees, foster change, and boost company culture. Within the last five years, they have made an increased effort to invest in the growth of their employees by

offering personal development opportunities. One way they have been able to achieve this is by sending out emails called “Weekly Reminders.”

In these reminders they go over different Arbinger tools related to specific issues employees have mentioned they need help solving. These issues include, poor communication disengaged teams, cross-department conflict, and a lack of accountability to name a few. The results speak for themselves.

Because of these weekly reminders, the employees are empowered to continue using the Arbinger tools after training is over. It isn’t an add-on or nice to have, but an integration to the everyday work that has helped transform their culture. Seeing people as people isn’t a tagline at INL, but a commitment. In one case, they were able to mend a relationship between two managers who haven’t seen eye to eye for over ten years. INL is now using these reminders to help get employees ready to come back into the offices after two years of being remote.

Returning to Work with an Outward Mindset

The focus of the weekly reminders has now shifted to keeping an outward mindset while coming back to work. On top of that, they host a call titled, Returning to Facilities with an Outward Mindset where they discuss specific topics like:

- Flexibility with new normal
- Embracing Change
- Seeing People as People

Every month there are around 800 participants who are engaged and who want to be prepared to return to work in the best way possible. When asked why they think so many people are participating the answer was simple, “because it works.” The

proof is in the results. Employing tools like Meet to Learn, Start the right way, 3A+, and the influence pyramid, have cultivated a culture where others come first. Now, with many employees back working in the office, they are ahead of the curve and have transitioned nicely.

They have received countless messages from people who have been impacted by these calls. Here are a couple of their comments:

"This was a really great way to start the week. There is so much hurt under the surface that we might never see and how we treat people either encourage that hurt to continue or can help stifle it and help them realize their worth. Thanks again for sending out these encouraging messages." – INL Employee

"Thank you for this wonderful reminder that being outward involves listening to and responding to the other's needs and desires. Without doing so, our efforts become good intentions, and we know the destination of the road paved with good intentions." – INL Employee

INL has been able to achieve this success because of its dedication to the people in its organization.

As many companies are working on a plan to bring their employees back to the office, it will be imperative that there is a focus on the people rather than the policies. How do you know what the employees need? Talk to them. Have a conversation and really listen. Step into their shoes and give them a voice in how they want to come back. The results won't disappoint.

To see how we can help build the best culture you've ever seen, [connect with us today](#).