



Lynn Wendt Senior Research Scientist



Education: PhD candidate, environmental science, University of Idaho; MS, biology, Idaho State University; BS, biochemistry, University of Minnesota

Company Name: Idaho National Laboratory

Industry: Energy

Company CEO: Dr. Mark Peters (Laboratory Director)

Company Headquarters Location: Idaho Falls, Idaho

Number of Employees: 5,000

Words you live by: Take a deep breath and jump in.

Personal Philosophy: Show kindness and compassion to others. We can achieve great things by supporting each other.

What book are you reading: *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain

What was your first job: I spent my summers in high school and college as a camp cook in McCall, Idaho

Favorite charity: Idaho Public Broadcasting Service

Interests: Gardening, cooking, hiking, and knitting

Family: My husband and two sons

What Makes a Person a Leader?

As leaders, our strength comes from engaging, inspiring, encouraging, and thoughtfully challenging our peers. Leading requires us to listen, to learn, to contemplate, and to make recommendations that we believe are the right approach. I know many leaders in my profession that exhibit these qualities, but only a handful of them are women, given that I work in the male-dominated field of science and engineering. One thing we women generally do better than our male counterparts is multitask, which gives us an upper hand when dealing with the complex roles a leader must face. We possess the inherent ability to excel as leaders if we have the confidence to do so.

Building confidence as a leader is not a trivial process, and for me it has taken many years. My youngest

son, now six, was a baby when a project was funded in my research group at Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and needed a lead. Despite more than 10 years of achievements as a junior scientist at INL, self-doubt loomed. I also knew managing this project would be a considerable increase in my workload and strain on my family. However, I took a deep breath and jumped in because I knew I was the most qualified in my group. That decision immediately led to new responsibilities that challenged my abilities and were admittedly daunting. However, each hurdle passed gave me confidence that I had made the right decision.

I am now in a leadership position that allows me to develop and communicate INL's vision of enabling a sustainable bioeconomy. I now understand that the revolutionary

changes I have made as a leader during my tenure at INL were due to the high-profile nature of the risks I've taken and the hard work that has established my technical competency. Being a leader takes guts and requires us to take risks. It means stating an opinion or proposing an idea that most certainly will be challenged. But each time we do it, we gain confidence.

Two comments I recently received from my senior leadership that resonate and encourage me daily are: "You got this" and "You earned this." These comments remind me that I do have the confidence and the skills to excel as a leader. My vision is that my female colleagues across professions will find this strength and potential within themselves, and that together we can break the glass ceiling that currently holds us down.