



# ANDREA BUTCHER

## Educating and Empowering

**By Symone C. Skrzycki**

It's early evening the night prior to the Indiana Chamber's 57th Annual Indiana HR Conference. Keynote presenter Andrea Butcher, president of HRD Advisory Group, picks up her phone.

"My grandma was sick and I needed to see her," she recalls. "I arranged for an amazing friend of mine to step in for me at the conference.

"It made me feel so good to be able to call Jennifer (George, Indiana Chamber director of business education and events) and say, 'Hey, I'm not going to be there, but no worries at all. I've got a great speaker lined up for you.' He did a great job! It all worked out.

"My grandma ended up passing away. That was the last time I was able to interact with her in her life. If I had not gone, I wouldn't have had that opportunity."

George has worked with Butcher on Indiana Chamber educational training events for over a decade.

"I've always been impressed by her professionalism and expertise," she notes. "In addition to being a phenomenal speaker, she's thorough and thoughtful with helping to develop content and planning leading up to the conference."

Butcher, who graduated with a bachelor's in psychology and master's degree in human resource management from Indiana State University, has built a career assisting employers – and their teams – expand talent.

HRD is "focused on leadership development. But I also very much feel like I serve the Chamber in that way as well," she reflects. "It's all under this umbrella of leadership/facilitator/coach. Even leadership in my life at home, I'm very intentional and thoughtful about our blended family (which includes the role of stepparent), how to best lead all of us towards a common vision and goal and how to support my husband as a dad. That's a leadership challenge like I've never had."

### **Cultivating talent**

Previously, Butcher spent several years as a consultant at FlashPoint, a human resource and management consulting firm based in Indianapolis. She followed that up with a stint at Defenders, where she led talent and HR.

It all paved the way to her position today at HRD.

"The founders of HRD reached out to me and basically said,

◀ Andrea Butcher emboldens her team – and clients – with a sense of confidence and fun!

‘Hey, we’re retiring. Do you want to run our vision?’ You don’t get those kinds of phone calls every day! I explored that with them and now have been at HRD since 2017.”

During that time, Butcher co-founded and today is board president of Next Gen Talent, a two-year development program for emerging HR leaders throughout the Midwest.

“The thing I always say is HR leadership is business leadership,” she explains. “It just so happens that you’re focused on the business’ greatest asset: the people in the business. But it’s really important that you have business skills. A business partner and I co-developed the idea and we’re getting ready to launch year four.”

### Leading through uncertainty, unrest

Amid the pandemic, Butcher has partnered with the Indiana Chamber on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. In 2020, she facilitated two complimentary member webinars that each featured a panel of business leaders.

“I’ve always loved to bring people together to support important initiatives,” she shares. “I don’t believe I brought any expertise to that. I believe I brought facilitation and passion and a whole lot of love and care for that. And I love doing that. I love bringing people together – because we’re created to be in relationships.”

“The biggest problems are when we go over into our corners and we try to figure



Butcher, shown motivating attendees at an Indiana Chamber conference, thrives on leadership coaching: “‘You’re creating it all. Look in the mirror and pay attention. ... You are empowered to make change.’ Any opportunity or platform I get for that – when the opportunity strikes, (I’ll) be there and be willing to step in.”

things out on our own. I like wrestling with tough topics. Diversity, equity and inclusion – it’s messy and it’s hard and everyone’s jumping off point is a little different. I’m not afraid to bring people together to have tough conversations because I believe in the power of that.”

She adds that COVID-19 has spotlighted the interconnectedness with all aspects of life.

“(It’s brought) recognition that it’s all connected. This holistic way of working and leading is really important to me; you can’t separate it out. It all supports each other.”

### Building relationships

Brett Hulse, Indiana Chamber director of membership strategy, worked closely with Butcher on the DEI webinars. He describes her as an extraordinary “connector.”

“In addition to training, she’s always been a very willing partner in helping the Chamber connect with companies that aren’t members,” he observes. “Making introductions and talking about how she’s been involved and what we do. Several have turned into long-term members.”

Butcher has served on the Indiana Chamber board since 2018 and is part of its Membership Ambassador program.

“When opportunity strikes, you step up for the opportunity,” she asserts. “If there’s an opportunity for me to connect people to resources – particularly because as a Chamber member I value the Chamber as well – I see the work. It’s genuine. It’s real. And it’s easy for me to make those connections. I can’t imagine not making those connections.”

She’s passionate about providing leaders with “a safe place to explore what they’re feeling, to figure out how do I lead through this and get guidance and support from other leaders.”

“I almost get emotional talking about that,” she imparts, her voice heavy with sentiment. “The work that I do, I take so seriously – because leadership is hard, and a lot of times, leaders feel lonely. It’s hard work figuring out: ‘Who am I and how can I show up in a way that reflects that and reflects my values?’ We live and work in a very pressure-driven society. I feel blessed and grateful to be able to come alongside leaders.” ■



Clowning around for a cause: Butcher has served on the Junior Achievement of Central Indiana Board of Directors for six years.