

## **Kolbe Professional Award 2015 – Phil Dyer**

### **My Kolbe Story:**

In June 2005, I had a pivotal, life-changing event of utmost magnitude; I completed the Kolbe A Index. When I received and reviewed the results, I had an out-of-body experience that I've described from stage many times since like this:

*“It was as if the clouds parted and the sun shone down and the angels began singing...I felt as if a crushing weight had suddenly been lifted off my shoulders. Finally, at age 42, I understood why I do things that way that I do them...in a way that's perfectly natural and aligned to my DNA. I now had the freedom to be me.”*

It's actually sometimes difficult to articulate how profound this realization and subsequent transformation has been for me both personally and professionally. In a nutshell, it's allowed me to act as a catalyst to create positive change in nearly 100 mid-to-large organizations and thousands of individuals/small business owners over the last decade.

### **Kolbe and Conation –The Missing Link Between Potential and Performance**

Over the last decade, how I've leveraged Kolbe and how I've employed it has gone through a gradual evolution – from “neat tool” to “essential foundation for organizational and individual success.” During the journey, I've come to believe that understanding and embracing the Conative mind is critical to bridging the performance gap plaguing so many organizations today, from small business to the Fortune 500 and from institutions of higher education to government agencies to non-profits

At the most fundamental level, Conation as manifested through the Kolbe A Index (and supporting assessments/tools) is the **missing link** between potential and performance.

### **Case Studies in Conation**

1. **Executive Team Dysfunction and Flat-Line Sales (Mid-Market International Shipping Company):** After facilitating a 1:1 strategy day for the CEO, he brought me in to work with their dysfunctional executive team and address their flat-line sales over the previous 2 years. We immediately scheduled a 2-day executive retreat, which included pre-retreat administration of the Kolbe A Index. After reviewing the Kolbe A results and interacting with the executives at the retreat, it immediately became clear that there was a major conative mismatch at the COO position and at the recently-vacated VP of Sales position.

After discussion with the CEO and several other execs, we made the decision at the retreat to dual-hat the CIO into the COO role and move the current COO to

VP of Sales, which was a much more natural fit. Following the retreat, I worked with the company for another 4 months to completely re-vamp their sales team.

We used Kolbe C Indexes to determine the preferred profile for their outside sales team and then compared that to the Kolbe A Index results of the current sales team. Again, a Conative mis-match emerged immediately as the consensus Kolbe C indicated an ideal QS result of 7+ and the longest-line QS on the team was a 4. With this information, we completely reworked their Position Description for outside sales, settled on an ideal Kolbe A profile and completely reworked their overall sales compensation plan to attract sales rock stars.

**The Results:** Morale on the full team went up dramatically as a result of the change at COO and measured team miscommunication/conflict declined by 50% over 3 months. In addition, the company saw a 42% increase in sales during the 6 months following the re-engineering of the outside sales hiring and compensation approach.

- 2. Critical Team in the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Pentagon/Government):** I was engaged by the team lead of a critical internal team in the highest office in the Pentagon due to low morale and significant turnover in a very high-stress environment. We began by having all 23 team members complete Kolbe A Index assessments and then debriefed the group results as part of a full-day team-building event at the Pentagon using interactive exercises designed to illustrate Conation and enhance the participants' understanding of practical applications.

The results showed a very polarized team with a tremendous amount of initiating and prevent energy, but very little accommodating energy. This dichotomy was creating a significant amount of both conative stress and strain within the team, along with a great deal of personal animus over fellow team members “not doing it the right way.”

We followed up the group team-building exercise with 30-minute 1:1 debriefs of all team members to ensure deeper understanding of their individual Kolbe A Index results, what that meant from a team perspective and how they could all function in greater harmony to achieve their high-profile mission.

**The Results:** Measured team miscommunication and conflict (from before and after surveys) dropped 62% and 70%, respectively. In addition, self-reported engagement and satisfaction increased by 26% and 40%, respectively. Finally, the team lead became the first team lead in almost 3 years not to be fired by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for poor performance.

- 3. Partnering with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) from Syracuse University to Empower Military Veteran Entrepreneurs:** As a veteran and serial entrepreneur, this population is near and dear to my heart!

Over the past 4 years, I've worked with IVMF to help military veteran entrepreneurs understand their Conative build and utilize that knowledge to (1) understand what tasks and activities that they personally should be focusing on in the business (2) the areas that are likely to be challenging for them and (3) how to effectively hire/team/partner to greater success.

To that end, we have administered over 250 Kolbe A Index assessments for this population and delivered additional training through webinars, live training and 1:1 counseling to help propel these motivated entrepreneurs forward. Many of these entrepreneurs have gone on to leverage Kolbe (primarily Kolbe A and C Indices) to expand their team and ensure they are hiring the right team members for each position.

**The Results:** While we didn't do a great job capturing feedback during this program, our anecdotal and on-going discussions have credited the insights gained through the Kolbe A Index and subsequent training as crucial to helping them achieve their business goals faster, with less frustration. One of the military veteran entrepreneurs went on to land funding on the hit ABC show ***Shark Tank*** and shared with me that understanding her Conative build has been tremendously helpful in building the right team to execute on her vision.

4. **Small Business Owners Trying to Land Fortune 1000 Corporate Clients:** Over the 3 years, I've worked with Angelique Rewers and the Corporate Agent to spread the "Kolbe Gospel" to several thousand small business owners that are seeking to land Fortune 1000 clients. We recommend Kolbe A Index (at a minimum) for everyone who participate in our virtual trainings and it's a non-negotiable requirement for the over 300 entrepreneurs that have worked directly with us in one of our higher-end programs.

We have "preached Kolbe from the pulpit" at our last two Inside Edge conferences (which have drawn 350 and 450 small business owners) and we're thrilled to have David Kolbe join us on stage in Scottsdale last year as part of our corporate panel.

We focus on several key areas when working with these entrepreneurs (as it relates to Conation), including:

- Building everything in the business, including programs and deliverables, to best leverage the business owner's Conative profile)
- Understanding what tasks the business owner is likely get into Conative resistance on and practical approaches to effectively move past those blocks.
- How to determine the priority order of team hires and what specific Kolbe A profile is the best fit for each hire
- How to structure team workflow to maximize the current Conative make-up of the team.

We consistently find that effectively leveraging Conation through Kolbe tools (primarily the Kolbe A and C indices) are the road signs at the critical fork in the road between success and failure as a small business owner.

**Results:** It would take up way too much space to list all of the results that our clients have seen over the last 3 years, but here is a small sampling of the results our clients have achieved (with Kolbe being a critical part of the equation):

- **Dental Practice Consulting Firm:** Went from solo business owner with \$120,000 in revenue in 2013 to a 6-person team and over \$870,000 in revenue in 2014 – an increase of over 700%.
- **Executive Coaching Practice:** Went from struggling solo business owner with revenue of only \$50,000 in 2013 to 3-person team and over \$200,000 in revenue in 2014 – an increase of 400%.
- **IT Outsourcing Firm:** Went from stuck in a job she hated earning \$80,000/year to a 3-person team with 15 contract IT professionals and \$300,000 in net revenue in 18 months.

While we certainly can't attribute all of the success above to Conation and Kolbe tools, we certainly feel that they are a key foundation stone upon which our clients' success (and ours) is built.

A significant number of our clients have found Kolbe so helpful and transformational that they have stepped up to become Kolbe certified (Dan Kimble, Ariana Blossom, Andrea MacKenzie, Kat O'Sullivan and several others).

### **Do We Get to Live Happily Ever After?**

A few years ago, when discussing the impact of understanding Conation and Kolbe with a skeptical senior executive from Turner Broadcasting, he quipped, "You sound like a total Kolbe Kool-Aid drinker."

After considering this for a few moments, I replied that yes indeed, I was an unabashed Kolbe Kool-Aid drinker because I found it one of very few predictive, distinguishing tools in the market place that effectively bridged the gap between personal/team potential and performance.

All the above might sound like the set-up for "happily ever after" – it's not...or at least not yet.

Why?

Because Kolbe is the **best kept secret** out there. We hate that we keep running into small, medium and large businesses that have NEVER heard of Conation and Kolbe. We

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would love to help you fix that and figure out a way to make the Kolbe suite of tools the standard for empowering personal and organizational peak performance. We refer to Kolbe as “the missing link between potential and performance” and think it’s an absolute tragedy that Kolbe isn’t as well known or fully utilized as MBTI or DISC.

Let’s change that!

So that’s my story and I’m sticking too it!