



To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write a letter to recognize the powerful Kolbe work that Celeste Ross and Chandon Thorell did at Arizona School for the Arts over the past year. While I have known and collaborated with them both over several years, I assure you that their professional development work over the past 12 months has quite simply changed the leadership direction of Arizona School for the Arts, a top-performing charter school located in Phoenix. In this letter, I would like to speak of the team impact and share my own testimonial.

To realize the impact of their work, it is essential to understand the group with whom they worked over the past year. ASA's administrative team consisted of highly driven, deeply committed professionals, many of whom had worked together for over a decade. For the most part, we were a group of individuals who had established relationships and patterns for interactions that allowed us to fulfill our own responsibilities and work with one another. For all intents and purposes, we were getting the job done and achieving impressive results. The administrative team had two new members that joined in Spring 2015, which created a new opportunity for the team to redefine the administrative team's work and focus. It was at this point that our professional development with Celeste and Chandon began; they conducted a full day training with our administrative team (composed of 9 individuals) to introduce the Kolbe Concept™ in general as well as the specifics about our own Kolbe A™ Index results.

Over the past twelve months, our team has continued to benefit from group trainings as well as individual coaching sessions. The group sessions have focused on practical applications of Kolbe to our individual roles and responsibilities as well as further understanding of how to maximize our Kolbe energy based on those responsibilities to the benefit of our school. While the Kolbe information is not particularly sensitive in and of itself, I can tell you that learning about yourself and your colleagues in a group session creates a level of vulnerability. The manner in which Celeste and Chandon handled the complexity of those dynamics and sensitivities is nothing less than spectacular. They set clear expectations for respect for both individuals and strengths. They honored the sharing and reflection of all voices. At moments when we would unknowingly or inattentively use the Kolbe MOs to label one another- even in jest- they would quickly and kindly redirect us to turn our attention to the energy, not the label. They understood the absolute significance of labels and the power labels can have to negatively impact relationships. As a result of their continued focus on encouraging and empowering each leader, our team is stronger and more unified than ever before in its history. I do not make that statement lightly. At the final group training, the atmosphere and group energy was more authentic and collaborative and candid than it had been at the first one. Their Kolbe work transformed the way we all saw ourselves individually as leaders as well as a collective leadership team.

In terms of my own professional development, I can honestly say that Celeste's and Chandon's time investment in my leadership has challenged me to grow in new and amazing ways. There was no way I could have anticipated the influence their work and coaching would have on my own leadership voice and presence. Others around me have acknowledged the change and literally "see" a different leader in their presence. Of most importance to me, they have honored the person I am. At no point did they try to change me or encourage me to be "more" or "less" of any quality. Instead, they have guided me back to my strengths while helping me see the strengths

in others. My leadership style can now bring out the best in others to achieve to better serve our school and students.

While I am a willing participant in this type of professional development, I can also say at no other point in my professional or personal life have I been stretched and challenged to grow as I was this year. Too bad Kolbe doesn't have some kind of leadership fitness challenge 😊. In all seriousness, as a result of their work, I am a more empowered leader, no longer living in the shadow of my mentor, my boss- a person for whom I have deep respect. Through my work with Celeste and Chandon, I more acutely appreciate that ASA needs a leader who stands on her strengths, who uses her voice, and sees herself as an equal- regardless of position or title. They have helped me set a new course and new vision for myself as a leader. For that I am eternally grateful.

I am not exaggerating to say that their work with our team has been completely changed the legacy of leadership at our institution. Thank you for giving them your highest consideration for their work. If I can provide further information, please reach out to me via email at maline@goasa.org or phone at 602-410-8116.

Sincerely,

Sara Maline Bohn

BACKGROUND ON ARIZONA SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Arizona School for the Arts is a non-profit public charter school in Phoenix, Arizona which emphasizes a college preparatory curriculum and the performing arts for students in grades 5 through 12. The CEO, 2016 winner of Phoenix's Athena Award and Thought Leader in her field, requested the services of Inside Out Ventures as they were going through a growth phase in the administration in response to the growth of the school over the last several years. The main area of focus was on developing leaders to manage the change effectively, lead from their own chair, and operate out of a distinction between collaboration and co-dependency when completing tasks and projects.

OBJECTIVES

The goals/objectives for ASA during the 2015-2016 school year were to develop:

- the individual strengths, gifts and talents of each Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member
- greater self-awareness and accountability to actively initiate using strengths, gifts and talents
- tools for effective, positive, and more frequent communication
- increased leadership and engagement in team synergy and cohesive action
- higher levels of collaboration, creativity and innovation in moving ASA toward future goals
- healthy organizational dynamics with respect to accountability and collaboration
- leadership in change management and strategic planning

CONSULTING USING KOLBE PRODUCTS, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES

Indexes

Kolbe ATM and BTM Indexes were taken by all participants. Kolbe CTM Indexes were taken by the CEO and key board members as a measure for Strain and Tension within executive roles and administrative duties of the Senior Leadership as a means by which to review and update job descriptions. ComparisonsTM: A to B reports were completed for select SLT members to clarify roles and responsibilities. ComparisonsTM: A to A interpretations were provided for each member of the SLT with at least one other member of the team as selected by the CEO.

Outcomes/Feedback with Use of Kolbe A, B and C Indexes

Growth and development noticed:

- increased self-awareness and initiative actions of Leaders
- shifting focus from “managing” to “leading” and from “enabling” to “empowering”
- redefining “leading” and “empowering” and modeling through communication and practice.
- improved morale - stress levels are receding; effective and consistent communication is increasing
- increased frequency and greater comfortability during crucial conversations using MO/Action Modes[®]
- leaders are gathering and interacting more in structured and non-structured times and places

- increased accountability and ownership in developing leadership actions and attitudes
- increase in leaders initiating action using Kolbe Strengths™ and Natural Advantages™
- increase in effective collaboration, feeling like “we’re all in this together”
- more able to ‘be present’ and engage with person(s) and task at hand
- increase in scope and frequency of strategic planning to help manage the change and growth of ASA

Training and Coaching for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) - Kolbe TeamSuccess® Seminars and Leadership Coaching

Training for the Senior Leadership Team

Four Trainings were delivered to the SLT throughout the year. (Note: The SLT had their initial introduction to Kolbe concepts - Team Success Seminar - in 2013.)

1. Review of Kolbe Concepts and focus on “Leading Change Management with Kolbe” (Summer 2015)
2. Kolbe Creative Solutions Meeting - the Creative Process (Fall 2015)
3. “Plotting A Vision: Context, Content, Process, Action” - Using Kolbe in Strategic Planning (Spring 2016)
4. Introduction to Kolbe Concepts and A Index Interpretations for Front Office Personnel - next level of Administration. (Spring 2016)

Leadership Coaching

Five members of the eight SLT members engaged in Leadership Coaching with Celeste. Though each SLT member determined their areas of focus (Leadership Passion List), all members were coached using Kolbe Concepts to develop their strengths and abilities to lead/work with others effectively, use conative language and 3 Parts of the Mind perspectives in building relationships, and to work collaboratively with other team members, faculty and staff. At the end of the school year, abbreviated coaching sessions were held with the remaining SLT members (the Office Manager, Vice Principal, and Executive Assistant) in preparation to identify goals and areas of focus for upcoming coaching sessions for 2016-2017. All SLT members are now scheduled for Leadership Coaching.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

In preparation for the May Strategic Planning meeting with the Board, individual phone sessions were held with each member of the SLT to identify their vision and strategic plan ideas for their respective departments, individual roles in implementing their ideas with their individual and collective MOs in mind, and to establish specific areas of focus for their own leadership development.

Outcomes/Feedback from Training and Coaching

SLT members report feeling greater confidence and ownership in “leading ASA from their chair”. Though each member of the SLT had/s their specific areas of focus for leadership development, common themes were as follows:

- more able to use a Kolbe lens and 3 Parts of the Mind when communicating
- greater facility in identifying and using the most effective Action Mode energy needed for a task or project (self and other members)
- paying more attention to and using language that builds relationship rather than building barriers with affect.
- feeling more free to ask “WHY” questions
- increased respect for others’ points of view and initiating Action Modes
- experiencing more trust and rapport with other team members
- noticing shifts and development in leadership of other team members
- increased awareness and focus on the actions, presence and body language of “one who leads”
- making more contributions to conversations and decision making processes of Senior Leadership
- thinking strategically, using Kolbe MOs, in planning for the future
- being proactive in sharing information
- understanding beliefs that get in the way of taking initiative or communicating effectively
- setting up conversations for success using Kolbe MO
- scheduling time for self-care
- increased self-trust - making the best decision using what is know at the time
- assisting others to self-resource instead of solving their problem for them - developing next level of leaders

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS REGARDING OUTCOMES

Most SLT members willingly and actively participated in group training and individual leadership coaching sessions. Early in the process, SLT members reported feeling encouraged and hopeful with possibilities and proceeded to cultivate a greater sense of direction, confidence, and ability to lead as they grew in facility with Kolbe Concepts and practiced “leading” actions developed throughout the year. Each member did their part to lead the change in SLT leadership. The members who were initially skeptical were the ones who, at the end of the year, asked for more Kolbe training and one-on-one Leadership Coaching for the upcoming year. Leadership at ASA is now significantly and measurably different than last year. There now exists a solid foundation and facility with Kolbe Concepts and use of Three Parts of the Mind. There is also a growing awareness and practice in setting up Conversation for Success using Kolbe MOs. Finally, there is a clear direction for continued training, growth and development of the SLT as they endeavor to develop a new generation of leaders at ASA.

TESTIMONIALS

(Attached see Sara Maline Bohn’s letter)