

The Advantage of Activating Instincts

A Study, Part 1

The Challenge

In 2019, the **humanworks8** team was formed to solve a well-known problem: work and life are too often separated and considered to be exclusive from one another. We believe the two should coexist...that a person can thrive in their work when their unique, individual qualities are recognized and valued. In fact, when this is true in a work environment, everyone within that business can thrive together and break down the barrier that divides life and work. We call it “bringing work to life” and we achieve it by elevating every touchpoint within a business that impacts people, or as we like to say, “bringing life to work.” As our consultancy establishes initial client relationships and continues to expand, it has become clear that each one of our clients is ultimately looking for the same thing: an advantage.

To be clear, prospective clients don’t typically begin a conversation by asking us “What advantage can you give us?” (although we love the question!) Instead, they tell us the people-related problems they need to solve. And that’s not a bad thing. We are here to help businesses solve the puzzle of company culture, performance management, communication, talent acquisition and employee engagement. But make no mistake, our clients understand that a living, thriving work environment is a supreme advantage, and that’s exactly what they seek. The challenge **humanworks8** faces is helping our clients realize that the advantage they seek lies within the natural instincts of their people. We work alongside clients to activate those instincts using a methodology called Kolbe Wisdom™ and an assessment named the Kolbe A™ Index. Kolbe is designed to measure the instinctive strengths of an individual, or their modus operandi (MO). The results of a Kolbe A Index tell how an individual is naturally driven to take action when they’re free to do things their way. Appropriately, the Kolbe Corp refers to this as a person’s Natural Advantage™.

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To better understanding the Natural Advantage revealed through the Kolbe A Index, let’s consider three organizations that **humanworks8** is currently engaged with: a start-up, a non-profit and an established company. Each one is in search of an advantage, and each one is on a journey to activate the natural instincts of their people through Kolbe Wisdom.

The Process

humanworks8 began by engaging each organization’s leadership team. Leaders were asked to complete the Kolbe A Index and gather for an informative session where a member of **humanworks8** explained the Kolbe methodology, led a demonstration of instincts in action and interpreted the leadership team’s Kolbe A Index results. At the beginning of the meeting, leaders were asked to share their expectations for the session.

Start-Up

Need: Work together more effectively

Challenge: Working remotely meant rarely interacting in person

Expectation: Capitalize on each other’s strengths, communicate more effectively and work cohesively

Non-Profit

Need: Stronger communication, and the right people in the right roles

Challenge: Inconsistent strategic planning caused a lack of alignment, they had previously hired an outside consultant, with disappointing results

Expectation: Get back on track

Established Company

Need: Strengthened people practices

Challenge: Skeptical if a workplace assessment like Kolbe was right for their business

Expectation: Learn if Kolbe could add value in their organization

Each leadership team spent 2-3 hours immersed in Kolbe methodology. After some completed an activity that showcased their instincts, they heard for the first time what Kolbe Wisdom said about their own natural methods of problem solving and the way their instincts drive them to take action. Leaders compared results, listened and even laughed as they discussed the validating insights of their natural ways of working, and considered whether this information provided a Natural Advantage to their business.

The Solution

The Kolbe overview sessions **humanworks8** led with each leadership team produced powerful discussions about the natural instincts and strengths of their people and how the truth Kolbe revealed could factor into work environments and relationships.

During their introduction to Kolbe, the start-up team focused the discussion on how their personal instincts to gather and share information impacted the way they communicated with each other. Several members on the team had instincts that drove them to seek as much information as possible, while others needed less and would naturally simplify the complex amounts of information being shared. The team discussed the best ways to communicate with each other, and how they prefer to receive important information. The conversation revealed how accurate and predictive Kolbe results are to an individual's natural way of working, leading one member of the team to remark that understanding a person's Kolbe result felt "like having a cheat sheet for human interaction." She was currently training another member of the leadership team to assume some of her responsibilities. At one point she turned to him and said, "I think you just got a blueprint for how to work with this team." As the discussion continued another member of the team commented, "It's amazing how much this resonates. I fight my instincts way too much."

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The non-profit leaders wanted to work more cohesively as a team, get the right people in the right roles and create alignment around strategic goals. Their introduction to Kolbe Wisdom was accompanied by ongoing strategic planning sessions led by **humanworks8**. Members of the executive team relied on their new understanding of each other's natural instinctive strengths as they worked together. Over the course of a year, the team revised their organization's vision and developed a new strategic plan, which has brought clarity to their operations and improved executive alignment with the organization's governing board. This clarity also led an executive leader to realize they weren't in the right role. The leader offered their full support to the recruitment and transition of a right-fit replacement. Reflecting on their first year of planning and the impact of Kolbe on the group, one of the executive leaders commented that the group was working "more effectively and accomplishing more together than ever before."

Leaders of the established organization, who questioned if the Kolbe A Index could provide useful insights, began to see a value that could not only be used within their company, but could give them an advantage with their own client relationships. After leading the initial discussion, the **humanworks8** team was asked by one leader, "How do I sell this to my clients?" Another senior executive was equally candid in a follow-up message to our team: "Before I met your team, I thought all this assessment stuff was BS. It had no value...but after I spent time with your team, and saw the results of the Kolbe assessment for both myself and other people, I could see how valuable this would be as a predictive tool in hiring process and even who you team together on jobs."

The Results and Further Action

Following their initial introduction to Kolbe Wisdom through the Kolbe A Index, each organization has begun to discuss ways to extend Kolbe methodology within their organization.

Start-Up	Non-Profit	Established Company
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing Kolbe for a full company roll-out• Discussing the use of Kolbe in their talent acquisition process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added the use of Kolbe Wisdom to their strategic plan• Currently rolling out the Kolbe A Index in one of their divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added Kolbe to their strategic plan• Beginning Kolbe implementation with a department later this year

*In his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, Patrick Lencioni states, **"Not finance. Not strategy. Not technology. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare."***

Teams work when the individuals that comprise the team are free to use their natural strengths to deliver their best results. Teams work when individuals understand how to leverage the strengths of others. Teams work when each person's unique, individual qualities are recognized and valued. That's activating instincts and that's the Natural Advantage our clients receive from integrating Kolbe Wisdom.