

Reprinted from:

JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT INQUIRY

"How Did They Do It?"

Conative Talents in a Crisis

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 Sage Publications, Inc.



# How Did They Do It?

## Conative Talents in a Crisis

ELIZABETH BERRY

*California State University—Northridge*

In the September 1995 issue of this journal, Judith Blumenthal discussed the crisis management at California State University—Northridge after the January 1994 earthquake. She described the leadership of the university administrators and drew conclusions about lessons learned from the crisis.

In terms of reaction to the earthquake itself, including activities related to containment, damage limitation, and recover, we probably did as good a job as could have been imagined . . . Probably the greatest missed opportunity for proactive crisis management was in the lack of organizational structures and processes capable of generating useful data and supporting the decision process. (p. 252)

Blumenthal suggested that "most of the faculty were privately appreciative and even proud of what the administration had accomplished after the greatest natural disaster to a university in the nation's history," but that many were disturbed by the strongly hierarchical nonconsultative faculty approach to solving problems (p. 252). Blumenthal acknowledges, however, that the "battlefield command role probably represented the only viable approach to getting spring semester launched" (p. 252).

This article puts forth another perspective, one that suggests the power of conation. One of the major reasons that California State University—Northridge

was able to reestablish itself in such a short time was because of the conative talents of university leaders. What happened at CSU—Northridge after the earthquake is an excellent example of how, in a crisis, conative talents provide the necessary energy to accomplish seemingly impossible goals. The following case study suggests the value of understanding conation as a leadership trait, its implications for dealing with crisis, and implications for organizing productive teams.

### WHAT IS CONATION?

The word, "conation," is one of the thousand most obscure words in the English language (Kolbe, 1990, p. xvii). Conation has to do with our volition, the way we strive, the effort we put into tasks, our natural tendency to do things. The conative is your will—how you act, your talents; it is what you will or will not do naturally. These are your striving instincts.

Long ago Plato and Aristotle identified the three distinct parts of the mind; they spoke of the three faculties through which we think, feel, and act. Psychologists have developed elaborate studies of the cognitive (thinking) and the affective (feeling), but little has been done to examine the conative (willing

and acting) part of the mind. Whereas intelligence tests measure I.Q. and personality tests measure values and preferences, only recently have we been able to measure the conative, the way we act, what we do while trying to achieve goals.

### The Kolbe Conative Index®

The Kolbe Index A® is a paper-and-pencil instrument that measures conation. It quantifies a person's inherent talent or natural way of doing things and predicts what a person will or will not do, given the freedom to act. Widely used in the corporate world (e.g., Coca Cola, Oracle, Xerox, Eastman Chemical), the Kolbe Index A® has been tested and found to be a reliable and valid measure of one's natural way of doing things.<sup>1</sup>

The Kolbe Index A® identifies four modes or striving instincts—Fact Finder, Follow Thru, Quick Start, and Implementor—each prompting people to act in a certain way. For example, the Fact Finder probes, asks questions, weighs pros and cons, and uses experience. This person collects data and establishes priorities before making a decision. The Follow Thru seeks structure, makes schedules, and time-lines. This person needs a sense of order and plans ahead. The Quick Start innovates, takes risks, improvises, and plays hunches. When asked to give a presentation, the Quick Start comfortably ad lib. The Implementor uses space and materials, builds, constructs, and uses hands-on equipment with ease. This person creates handcrafted models and insists on quality materials. When we are required to do so, we all operate in each of the four modes. However, when we are able to use our own natural instincts and choose to act in our dominant mode, we are the most productive and we thrive when we are working "with our grain."

The four striving instincts are expressed through three possible operating zones, indicating how we will make use of our striving instincts. The initiation/insistence zone (7-10) is *how you will act*; the response/accommodating zone (4-6) is *how you are willing to act*; and the prevention/resistance zone (1-3) is *how you won't act*. These zones form a spectrum of behaviors for each instinct that can be noted in four digits (see Figure 1).

The order in which they are given is always Fact Finder, Follow Thru, Quick Start, and Implementor. For example, my KCI® results are 7752. I am a (7) Fact Finder, (7) Follow Thru, (5) Quick Start, and (2) Imple-

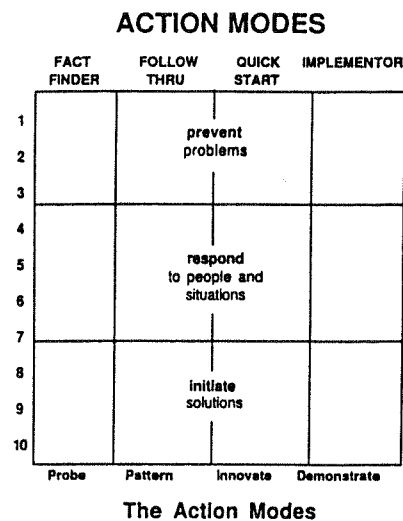


Figure 1: Action Modes

Source: Kolbe (1995, p. 27).

mentor. If I am to solve a problem, I have a need for information and structure; the first thing I will do is probe, investigate, and then plan and organize the data. I keep lists, prioritize, and always have a schedule. I can accommodate innovation and experimentation and will go along with brainstorming, but I will not lead off with that type of strategy. As a preventative Implementor, I resist working with my hands and fixing anything. I thrive when I am doing research and planning, and have the need for evidence before I will make a decision.

### CASE STUDY: PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS

Within days after the earthquake, the university's President announced that classes would begin in 5 weeks, just 2 weeks later than the scheduled spring semester starting dates. Looking at the extensive damage and recognizing the enormous difficulties, many doubted the possibility. As I observed the subsequent action, I saw that the situation elicited remarkable achievements. The university leaders seemed to have certain traits that energized themselves as well as others. As Bass (Yukl, 1989, p. 176) stated: "It is now recognized that certain traits increase the likelihood that a leader will be effective, but they do not guarantee effectiveness, and the relative importance of different traits is dependent on the *nature of the leadership situation*." (italics mine).

Table 1  
The Kolbe Index A<sup>®</sup> Scores for Key University Administrators and Faculty

Position	KCI™	Mode of Operation
President	4393	Quick Start
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	4293	Quick Start
Vice Provost and Dean of Libraries	4574	Quick Start
Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences	7373	Quick Start/ Fact Finder
Associate Vice President, Facilities Planning and Operations	5473	Quick Start
Director, Physical Plant Management	6374	Quick Start
Associate Vice President, Academic Resources	7833	Follow Thru/ Fact Finder
Manager, Academic Resources, School of Science and Mathematics	6832	Follow Thru
President, California Faculty Association	6365	Facilitator <sup>a</sup>
Art Professor	4287	Quick Start

a. Some individuals' KCI A<sup>®</sup> scores reflect accommodation (a score of 4-6) with no insistencies in a mode. They tend to mediate between insistence or preventative behavior of others.

### Data Summary and Assessment

Eight university administrators and two faculty completed the Kolbe Index A<sup>®</sup> and participated in an interview a year after the earthquake. Each had played a key role in the reopening of the university and represented units of the university's administrative structure and faculty.

The summary results (see Table 1) clearly identify how Quick Start talents dominated the team of academic leaders. The President and Provost/Vice President had exactly the same high Quick Start insistencies; although the other administrators were insistent Quick Starts, they were not as insistent. Only the Associate Vice President, Facilities Planning and Operations, and the Manager, Academic Resources, for the School of Science and Mathematics had both insistent Fact Finder and Follow Thru talents. Of the two faculty, the art professor was an insistent Quick Start and Implementor; the faculty union leader indicated no insistencies.

#### President of CSU Northridge (4393) Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (4293)

The President and the Provost/Vice President are insistent Quick Starts with barely accommodating

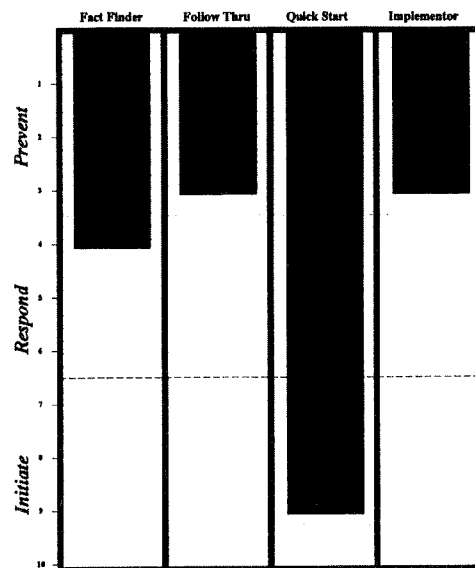


Figure 2: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index<sup>®</sup> Result for President of California State University—Northridge

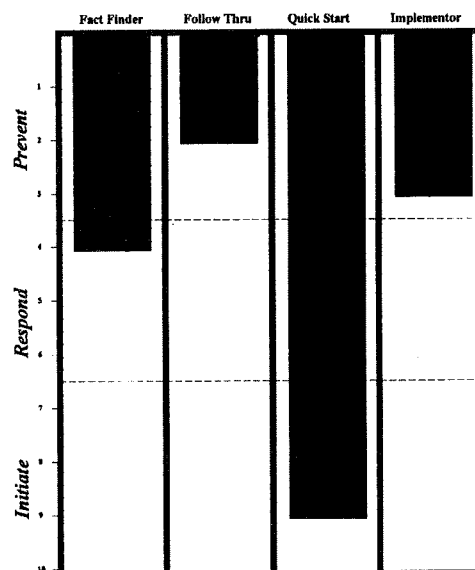


Figure 3: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index<sup>®</sup> Result for Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Fact Finder, preventative in Follow Thru, and Implementor. As insistent Quick Starts, their striving instincts were well-matched for dealing with a crisis, because they had to make hundreds of quick decisions daily without the luxury of gathering data, weighing pros and cons, and systematically assessing longer-term consequences.

The President's ability to remain calm (and even thrive in such adverse conditions) validates her strong insistent Quick Start talent. She stated that the worst stress she felt was related to physical safety of the staff—not the fact that she was constantly being required to quickly assess changing situations and solve problems. It must be emphasized that the university was devastated. No buildings were accessible and the complete infrastructure had to be recreated; yet at no time, she has said, did the President consider closing down the university. The university opened only 2 weeks after normally scheduled classes, as planned.

The Provost, perhaps, experienced more stress because she was responsible for following through on many of the needed solutions; she had to organize the major academic units. There were thousands of details to which to attend and as a preventative Fact Finder/Follow Thru, she was forced to work against her natural grain or delegate these kinds of responsibilities to others. On the other hand, because the crisis did not allow for thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the endless choices that had to be made, the Provost was not forced to justify her decisions. Thus she primarily used her Quick Start instincts while relying on others to carry out decisions. The Provost noted the uniqueness of the situation when she said, "I don't think knowing how to set up 500 trailers and domes is a transferable skill. When will I need to do that again! When has anyone had to do it?"

Other people with other conative insistentencies would no doubt have spent a great amount of time analyzing the situation or would have agonized over the decision. While under great pressure, the two top executives consulted quickly and acted promptly.

For instance, the decision to bring in 500 trailers to house classrooms and faculty offices illustrates well the enormous complexity of only one aspect of the situation. After deciding that it was impossible to determine, with any reliability, which buildings were safe, the administrative staff began to discuss other possibilities for housing students, faculty, and staff. The Provost remembered the situation this way:

We had been working for several days, assessing the damage and trying to determine which buildings were safe. We'd make a decision and there would be an aftershock. Then everything would change. I finally went into the President's tent and said, "I can't do this any more. We have to bring in trailers or do something else. We can't count on access to the buildings." After some discussion the President agreed that

since the status of building safety was constantly changing, trailers would solve the problem of providing classrooms.

And after being assured that safety factors were not a problem, the two Quick Starts made the decision to set up trailer parks over every vacant space on campus and get ready for spring semester. Without that decision, the university would not have opened. Throughout, their decisiveness surprised and even shocked others.

#### Vice Provost and Dean of Libraries (4574)

The Vice Provost/Dean of Libraries is an example of an insistent Quick Start who is accommodating in the other three modes, that is, Fact Finder, Follow Thru, and Implementor. Although she is not naturally inclined to initiate action in these three modes, she is comfortable working in situations where she needs to probe and examine, plan and organize, and use physical space and equipment. For example, when she became aware that essential computer data were in the South Library, which had serious structural damage, she and four others donned hard hats and entered the South Library via a darkened stairway. Using a cherry picker, they retrieved critical information, such as Touch Tone Registration data, admissions and records, class schedules, financial aid, and payroll. As they were frantically getting the needed tapes and equipment, a 5.5 aftershock struck, which caused the walls to sway inside the building—a truly terrifying moment!

The Vice Provost's description of how she decided to act, that is, to take the risks to retrieve the tapes, illustrates Quick Start insistence with highly accommodating Fact Finder, Follow Thru, and Implementor.

The staff said they had some bad news to tell me; the critical tapes were still inside the South Library and those missing tapes would prevent us from bringing up the registration system which the President said was the top priority (in order to bring the students back). As we discussed the problem, we decided we had to get into the building. I asked the Vice President for Facilities Planning for a "cherry picker" so that we would not have to go up and down those dangerous stairs. I said, "Does everyone know the risks?" And they said they did and they would be willing to go. Then we set about planning all of the things that we would need: safety gear, emergency strategy, and so on. Then we went. The whole process took about an hour and a half from the presentation of the problem to our presence in the South Library. A fast decision had to be made, I knew it was the right one, but we

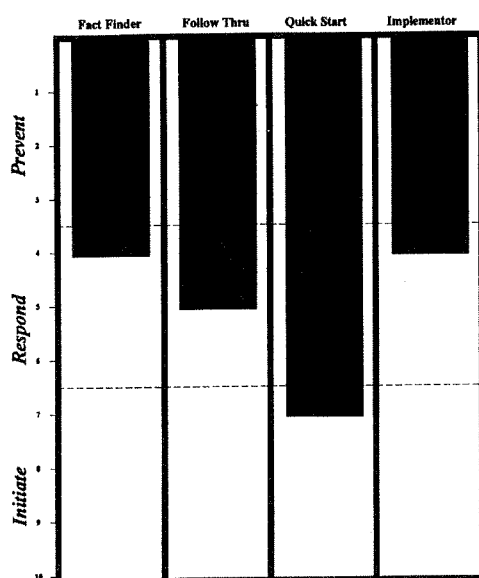


Figure 4: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index® Result for Vice Provost and Dean of Libraries

also had to take all of the necessary care for the safety of the people. I usually wait for that "go ahead feeling" when I'm making a decision, but given the unusual circumstances, I realized that I had to consider other factors.

Following the aftershock, they stayed until they found the tapes, taking extreme risks. Their efforts allowed the campus to get critical systems up and running.

**Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (7373)**  
**Associate Vice President, Facilities Planning and Operations (5473)**  
**Director, Physical Plant Management (6374)**

As an insistent Quick Start/Fact Finder, the Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences played an important role in bridging the gap between the insistent Quick Start administrators and those on campus who had the need for more information and data before taking action. This combination of talents allowed him to act with a sense of urgency and try to compress time with short-cuts and a bottom-line focus; however, he also developed processes to assess priorities, gather information, and keep others informed.

Shortly after the initial assessment of the damage, middle-level administrators and staff scrambled to set

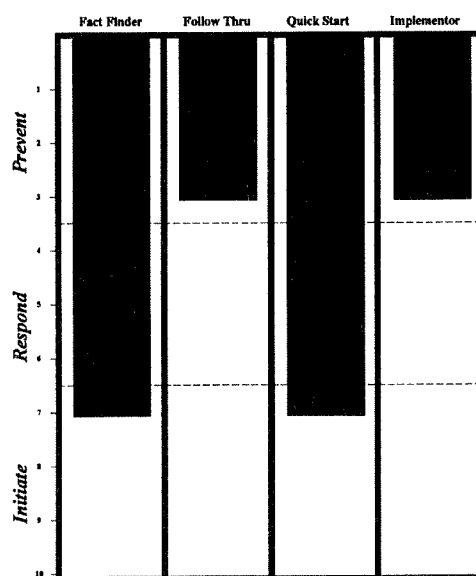


Figure 5: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index® Result for Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

up the basic university structures. The Dean recalled, "I remember sort of stumbling into the Provost's office in the dormitories and asking her very innocently, 'May I be of help?' I'll always remember her looking up and saying, 'Can you help us with space?' And I said, 'Certainly.' " The task involved organizing the trailers by assigning them to departments and programs, producing a schedule of classes within a week, and assessing the usability of the classroom facilities. This was not a job one would normally assign to a dean, but as he said in dealing with the crisis, "the people with the talents were not necessarily the ones with the stripes."

Similarly, the two administrators in charge of planning and implementing the rebuilding of the physical structures on campus functioned relatively well despite the chaos and the constantly changing directions they received from the top administrators. The Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Operations was able to brainstorm, take risks, and, in many cases, act intuitively; more important, his accommodating Fact Finder and Follow Thru tendencies allowed him to work productively with others who had the need for more detail and data. As a preventative Implementor, this administrator did not need tangible evidence; his instincts were more conceptual than mechanical. He created ways to bring junior people up to speed quickly and then trusted them to take responsibility for projects. He commented that he continually

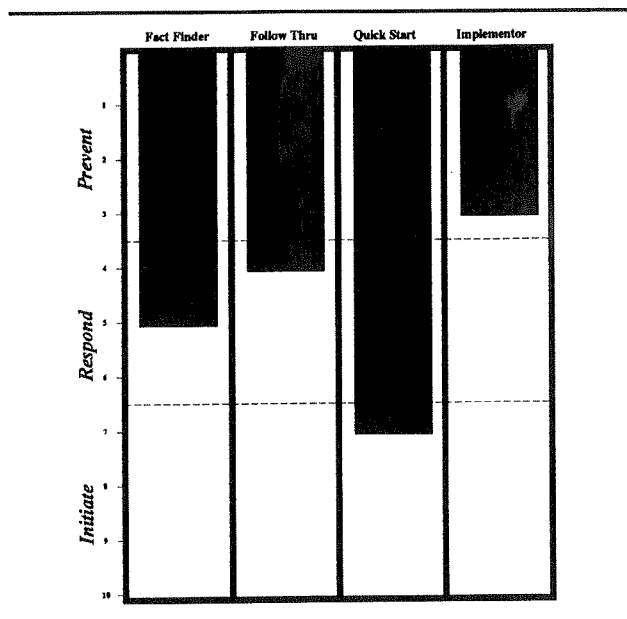


Figure 6: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index® Result for Associate Vice President, Facilities Planning and Operations

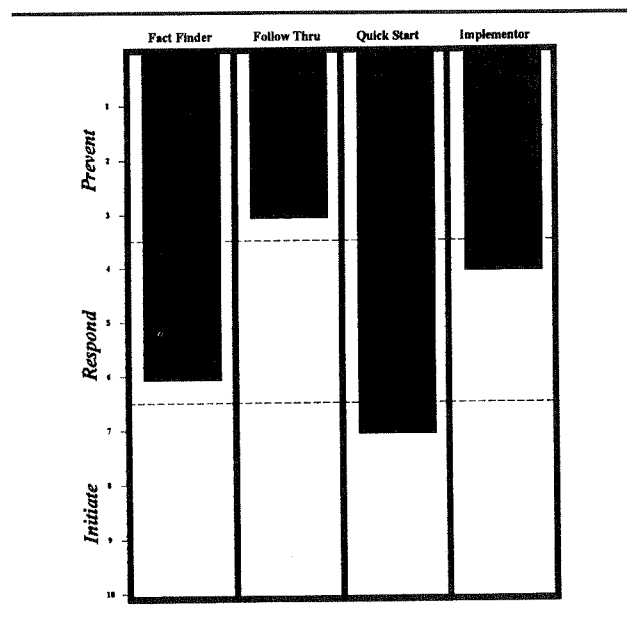


Figure 7: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index® Result for Director, Physical Plant Management

found new leadership emerging from among the junior staff.

As a highly accommodating Fact Finder, the Director of Plant Operations had more of a need for information and less of a need for structure and specific plans than his immediate supervisor, the Associate Vice President of Facilities Planning and Operations. His approach was "whatever it takes." He was comfortable

when the need arose to analyze the use of physical space, in the construction and transporting of tangible goods, and solving problems by using tools and equipment.

These three administrators carried out critical tasks of rebuilding the campus.

**Associate Vice President,  
Academic Resources (7833)  
Manager of Academic Resources  
for School of Science and  
Mathematics (6832)**

The administrator for planning and providing all of the academic resources, such as classrooms, equipment, and security systems, possessed the conative talents needed for his job during *normal* times. As an insistent Fact Finder (7), Follow Thru (8), he had the natural instinct to probe, research, and set priorities. Following his natural tendency, he asked many questions, weighed pros and cons, and paid attention to detail. Although there was no history on which to draw for this particular crisis, he relied on formulas and his extensive personal experience. As an insistent Follow Thru, he needed to establish routines, systems, and procedures for creating order.

As an insistent Fact Finder and Follow Thru, this administrator tried to gather as much information as possible and to act sequentially, according to a predetermined schedule. He experienced extreme stress in the post-earthquake environment.

The Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Resources was initially responsible for deciding where to place the trailers and how to equip them as classrooms. As a professor of geography, with more than 20 years experience at CSU—Northridge, he was certainly capable of analyzing and understanding the space configuration of the campus, yet he experienced great stress because he had to work with uncertainty and against changing deadlines and conditions:

I knew what space was available, and I warned the contractors that their original sites for the trailers were on a fault line. I tried to create a structure. We had a good start, but things got out of control. I couldn't get the information out fast enough. I could foresee what we needed and I had all the things planned but many times these plans were not executed.

One example he gave was that he had developed an extensive list of everything that was needed to equip the trailers as classrooms, that is, tables, chairs, blinds,

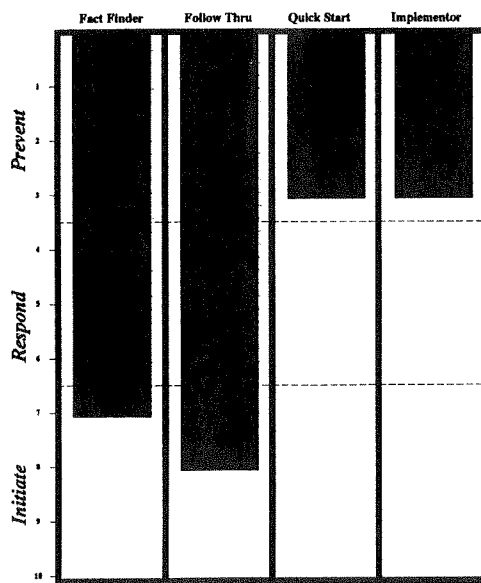


Figure 8: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE A index® Result for Associate Vice President, Academic Resources

security locks, screens, black boards; he thought of everything. But in the chaos, only tables and chairs were ordered. And as the deadline for the opening day of classes approached, other nonhuman elements worked against this man's orderly plans. Extreme winds hit Southern California and the trucks transporting the trailers were delayed. Consequently, this Fact Finder/Follow Thru was forced to work against his grain; his natural way of doing things was in conflict with what was demanded of the situation.

Once decisions were made regarding facilities and equipment, Follow Thru talent was needed. For example, if trailers were going to house classes, schedules had to be drawn up; rooms had to be assigned; heating, plumbing, and air conditioning had to be hooked up; keys and signage were needed. In many ways, a whole new campus was being built. People responsible for carrying out the plans were the managers of academic resources.

Each of the eight schools at California State University—Northridge has a manager of academic resources (MAR), whose job was to coordinate and manage the budgets, equipment, and schedules. The MAR for the School of Science and Math, as an insistent Follow Thru, worked best when she was able to work without interruptions and could complete tasks sequentially. Before acting, she would think of every contingency and consider the long-range impact of decisions. Her experience was probably typical of the other MARs

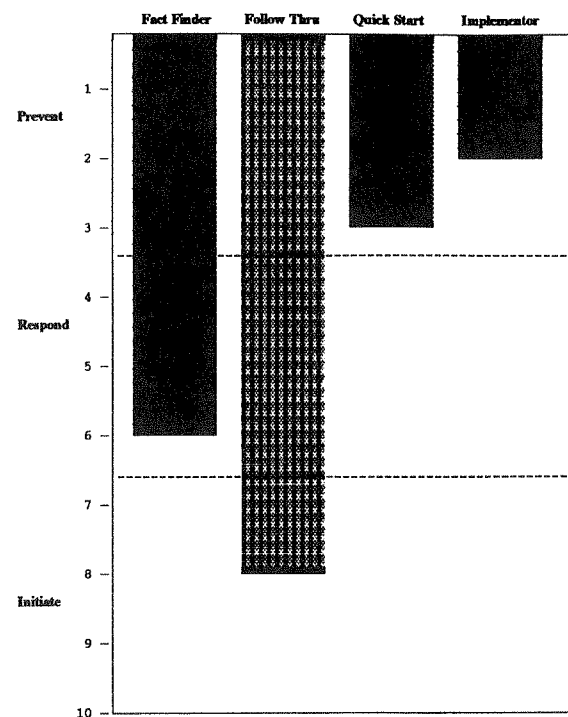


Figure 9: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE CONATIVE INDEX® Result for Manager, Academic Resources, School of Science and Mathematics

and those who have insistent Follow Thru instincts. She was extremely stressed and physically exhausted: "We're supposed to be figuring out how to get the campus operating again, but the ground keeps shifting beneath us—both the earth and the executive directions."

As it got closer to the reopening, other plans were needed: information booths, maps, parking, student loans, concession booths, and communication to the community about the semester schedule. One must realize that all this was going on as staff worked in tents with limited phone access and no computers. It rained and it was alternately cold or miserably hot. Hundreds of workers were on campus assessing the damage, which increased with each aftershock. With the constantly changing exigencies, it was a Follow Thru's nightmare. What I saw as one of the most stressful situations during this period was the inability of the staff to count on consistent and coherent directives. They would begin working on schedules, for example, and trailers would be reassigned or it would be decided that a dome would be better for a lecture class. Every day things would change. Through all this, the MARs were on the front line, trying to carry out the decisions. Their talent for planning and organ-

izing was thwarted by chaotic conditions and what they perceived as unreasonable orders.

### California Faculty Association President (6365)

As a facilitator, the president of the statewide faculty union—the California Faculty Association (CFA)<sup>2</sup>—has no need to initiate action in any of the modes and was accommodating in three of them and preventative Follow Thru: “Their reward comes from team play, from being a utility infielder or being cross-trained in many roles. They need to work with initiators who provide opportunities for them to respond. They can be good leaders through their knack for bringing consensus” (Kolbe, 1993, p. 62).

Immediately after the earthquake, he ventured on campus to view the damage and assessed what he and his organization might do. His comments about his own role after the earthquake, and more generally about facilitators, are particularly insightful.

As soon as I was able to get on top of the damage at my own house, I was anxious to find out what we could do at CSUN. The CFA general manager and I visited the damaged campus; we provided the administration with phone numbers and addresses of all faculty; we printed news updates and information pieces for all the faculty; we mailed directly to their homes campus updates, directives from President Wilson. Also we set up a hot line at the CFA office. We provided faculty with the names of their disciplinary counterparts on other campuses who might have syllabi, books, equipment and many contacts were made. We obtained emergency financial assistance from the affiliates for checks to go to faculty and other CSU Northridge staff in need. For a few days after the quake we brought water, food, and chairs to campus. Personally, I felt some frustration over being UNDER utilized as the facilitator. I suspect that facilitators often end up with this feeling; indeed, this feeling is probably the other side of the coin of an instinct for compassion and helpfulness. Also, I found the Follow Thru activities (i.e., setting up the off-site office, getting checks to people from CTA, fielding individual complaints about lost property or the neglect of this or that administrator) was something I absolutely had to delegate. I suppose, also, I wanted more direction from the campus administrators about what they could use us for; fresh ideas were not my forte here. I wanted to be a helper, not the inventor.

### Art Professor (4287)

This faculty member, as an insistent Quick Start and Implementor, was highly intuitive, played hunches,

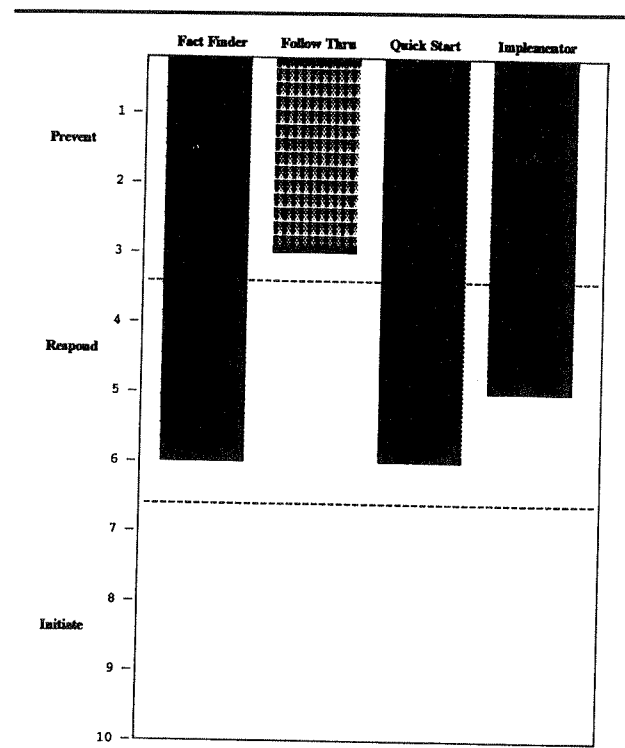


Figure 10: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE CONATIVE INDEX® Result for President, California Faculty Association

and improvised. As a preventative Follow Thru, she resisted getting boxed in and following routines and schedules. Her insistent Implementor impelled her to transform abstract notions into concrete, readily demonstrable objectives. She both manipulated materials easily and insisted on quality materials. In a letter to her dean, she described how she acted in the crisis. She wrote:

Early in the Spring semester of 1994 after the January 17th earthquake we returned to a city of trailers from which to learn and teach. Three of my students and I conversed about how depressing the environment felt in the trailer areas, how were we going to work as artists without sinks and that basically it felt like an “internment camp.” As the discussion continued we decided that maybe what we needed to lift our spirits and hopefully everybody else’s would be to bring some color and visual imagery into the environment. We decided to paint a mural on a trailer ramp, which unlike the trailers, would not be returned. A detailed map with all dimensions was drawn while some of us began the lengthy process of preparing the surface. We spackled and then sanded, using power sanders and finishing with hand sanding. Then the surface was primed with gesso. Drawings were done, enlarged and transferred to the surface and the painting began. The entire process took all semester.

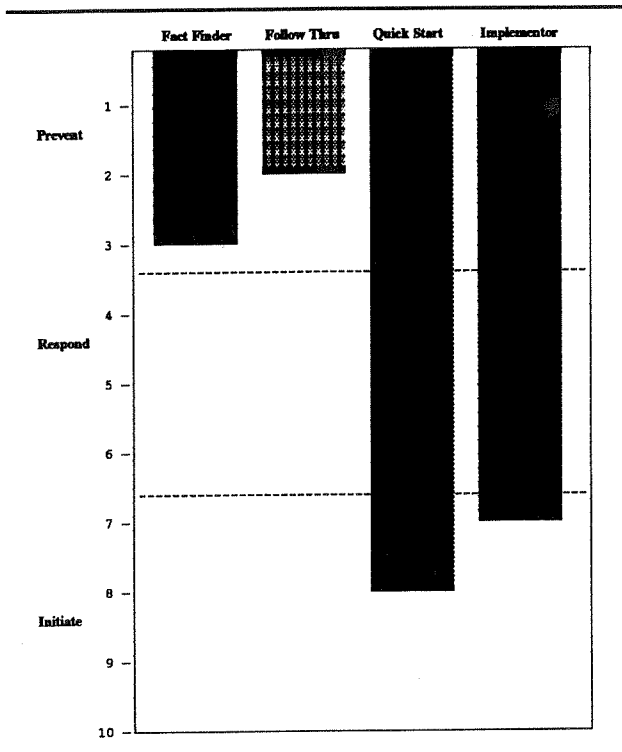


Figure 11: Kolbe Talent Analysis: KOLBE CONATIVE INDEX® Result for Art Professor

These words articulate her need to manipulate the environment in a concrete way. Her description of the creation of the mural shows her delight in using implements. As she reflected back on the earthquake experience, she found it one of her best teaching experiences.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING CONATION

This case study illustrated how conative talents and Quick Start tendencies within the leadership at California State University—Northridge contributed to the rapid start-up after the most serious natural disaster to befall an institution of higher education. It was clear that the Quick Start insistency, combined with the Follow Thru prevention modus operandi, facilitated the quick thinking and action that took place. The insistent Quick Start (70% of the group) thought quickly on the job, took risks, originated options, defied the odds, discovered alternatives, and created innovation. As preventative Follow Thrus, they tended not to be rigid with plans, get stuck in routines, function by rote, repeat patterns, get caught up in procedures, and act sequentially. The combination of

these two action mode distributions seemed to be a great makeup for a group in a crisis situation. The analysis also suggested why some people experienced greater stress than others during the aftermath of the disaster, and how conflicts were a natural result of people being forced to work against their grain for an extended period of time.

### Predicting Actions From the Synergy Report

Using the results of the Kolbe indexes, what might we predict about how this group would function as a team under other conditions? The ideal team has a synergistic mix of striving instincts:

Conative diversity provides the multiplier effect that converts the otherwise limited creative energy of independent contributors into vastly magnified productivity. . . . Synergy is a productive balance of instincts within a team. It is derived from a mixture of complementary conative talents. (Kolbe, 1993, p. 142)

According to Kolbe, "ideal synergy involves not only the right mix of instincts to initiate solutions, but the same amount of energy working to avoid problems as well" (Kolbe, 1993, p. 145). Based on an extensive analysis of hundreds of teams that have successfully met their goals, successful teams have a distribution of its members' instinctive energy divided (25% each) among initiation and prevention, with 50% in the accommodating zone. In each case, it was found that the distribution of the successful team members' instinctive energy was evenly divided (25% each) between preventions and initiations. The conative pull of will and won't is moderated by 50% of energy in the accommodating zone. The findings have been replicated in corporations, universities, and government groups.

A Synergy Report™ (see Figure 12) graphically illustrates the distribution of energy in each action mode and pinpoints problems by indicating the zone in which a team varies from ideal synergy.

For instance, in other noncrisis situations, an overabundance of Quick Start energy can portend a flutter of nonproductive activity or inertia. Inertia exists when more than two thirds of the group are in one zone of an action mode.

Conflict is the difference between two individuals of 4 units or more on the intensity scale for an action mode. It can lead to complimentary synergy when both people enjoy the freedom to be themselves within the relationship; that is, what one person avoids doing,

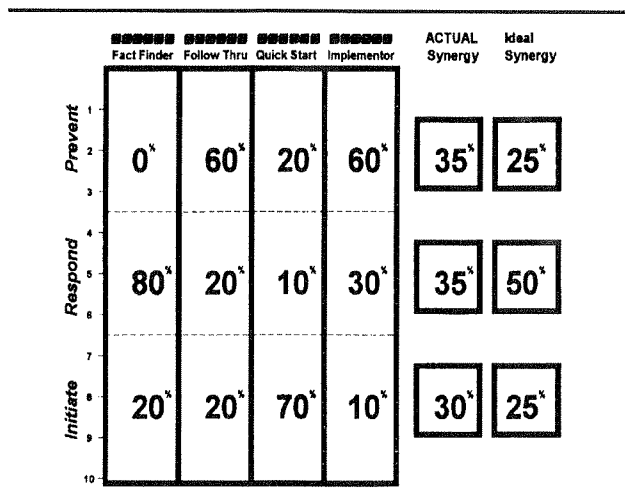


Figure 12: Synergy Report™: California State University—Northridge

Note: This analysis is based on an organization of 10, with 10 respondents.

the other may understand and take it upon him- or herself to accomplish. In the CSU—Northridge group, the main source of conflict tended to be in the Follow Thru action mode, with 2 out of the 10 people being insistent and 7 out of the 10 being preventative. The opposite pattern occurred in the Quick Start, with 7 out of the 10 being insistent and 2 out of the 10 being preventative. Now that the crisis is over, speculatively, the group could function more efficiently by adding few preventative Fact Finders and accommodating Follow Thrus. In addition, the group could use a few less insistent and a few more accommodating Quick Starts, or less preventative and more accommodating Implementors.

### CONCLUDING NOTE

The impetus for this study was my observation of the remarkable recovery efforts made by the California State University—Northridge administrators after the 1994 earthquake. I watched with amazement how quickly decisions were made and how certain leaders seemed to be thriving in chaos, whereas other experienced extreme stress. My previous experience with using the Kolbe instruments suggested that this particular leadership team was operating with a “defy the odds” approach, typical of Quick Start talent. My subsequent data collection and analysis supported this

hypothesis. Unusual situations, such as an earthquake or other crises, demand tireless effort and uncommon leadership. Although, in the long run, a synergistic team made up of a combination of instinctive abilities would be most productive, the immediate effects of the Quick Start insistence in this case was crucial.

In today’s workplace environment, where more and more organizations confront crisis-like situations, it becomes imperative that leadership understand which employees perform best in an emergency. Those in leadership positions may not necessarily be the best ones to lead during a crisis. At CSU—Northridge, the top administrators possessed the needed talents to meet the challenges of the post-earthquake chaos; in other organizations facing an emergency, it might be necessary to reorganize and regroup. Organizations must recognize this possibility and provide for bringing in new talents, even if they do not have “the stripes.”

### NOTES

1. Validity and reliability of Kolbe Index™ studies have been conducted to ensure that the Kolbe Index™ truly measures conation, that part of the mind not related to either affect or intellect. An initial list of more than 200 items were narrowed down to the 50 least likely to differentiate between high and low performers on an intelligence test and that strongly correlated with an interest inventory. A social desirability study identified those items most susceptible to response distortion, thus leaving 36 questions as the final version of the Kolbe Index™.

Test-retest reliability has found the instrument to be 90% reliable with  $\pm 1$  intensity unit within any one action mode. In addition, studies have found the Kolbe Index™ to be able to differentiate between volitional actions in different occupations such as sales and accounting. Bias studies have determined that the Kolbe Index™ is not discriminatory against groups based on age, race, or sex. In other words, a normal distribution of intensity scores can be expected within the operation zones for each action mode. Finally, utility studies have provided evidence that installing the Kolbe system into an organization can substantially reduce turnover. In one instance, it was reduced by more than 40% after 1 year. The instrument also abides by all federal guidelines set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

2. The California Faculty Association is the largest union of higher education faculty in the United States, representing approximately 20,000 members. The president of the statewide organization is a faculty member at California State University—Northridge, but he was on leave from his campus responsibilities to fulfill his CFA duties.