

Andy Kindler

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Andy Kindler is a bit like the depth finder that never quite seems to reach the bottom. He's approachable – affable even – in his ability to draw you into a conversation. But as you speak with him, you quickly begin to understand the depth of the passion and experience that he has for what he does. "This is the job I was meant to do," he says about his role at Xcellero. "The opportunities we have to work with clients, to work with a partner like Doug, why would I want to do anything else?"



Make no mistake, Andy knows a thing or two about working. "I've been working in a paid capacity since I was about 14 years old. Umpiring baseball games, working construction, or in convenience stores. Even at a young age, I enjoyed working." There is no doubt that Andy worked hard and smart for the jobs he held the rest of his career leading, molding and "helping people and companies to navigate their ways to achieving their maximum potentials."

There are two constants in Andy's career. "My business travels mean I've been almost everywhere in the United States. And by way of my corporate experience and consulting, I have worked in just about every industry from manufacturing and distribution, to financial and professional services, to healthcare, to nonprofits.

Each industry is unique with its own challenges, but that's what I love about having that range of experience. I can learn from and apply lessons from each of them."

Having spent more than 15 years in and around retail companies as the head of HR, Andy helped some of the largest retail real estate and management firms to successfully find their ways through seven, distinct mergers and acquisitions. "It's a cultural and operational challenge when you bring two companies together. You have to help people to understand and process the change. You have to help them to understand and identify with how to set common goals. And finally you have to get to the point of getting everyone aligned to achieve those goals. It's a process where insight must guide how to manage personal and corporate motivators."

Andy began consulting with companies on growth-centered initiatives and development in 1998, but he recognized his calling quite some time before that. "I was sitting in a seminar in Minnesota, listening to consultants, and they were quite bad. I knew that if they were making money being bad consultants that I could make money and do good for my clients."

His time on the corporate side of the equation helps Andy to readily identify with the challenges that his clients face on a day to day basis. That's why he says that there are two

primary factors when he meets a potential client. "First, I want them to be able to determine whether they feel I can help them to identify and reach their goals. Then, second, I want to earn their trust so that I can challenge them – to sometimes say things they don't want to hear – to help them reach their goals."

When asked about what he's most proud of over his career, it's an easy answer for Andy. "I can quickly name six people who worked for me who are now the heads of HR in their companies. In each case, I helped them to identify their long-term goals and then they reached them. Those are pinnacle moments for me."

It's not just an idle statement either. Andy sees leadership development – or more importantly, the lack thereof – as one of the serious issues facing American businesses. "I'm concerned because I see too many companies focused almost exclusively on the near-term issues. No one is building future leaders for when the current generation of Baby Boomers bow out. That seems like the result of two primary factors. One, the Baby Boomer leaders don't want tailgaters, or in other words a younger or more ambitious worker to challenge or push them out before they're ready. Two, workers seem to have become too transient. No one wants to invest in the long term because they're not sure that worker who they're investing in will be there. The result is a significant capabilities gap between the current generation of leaders and the next."

Whether it's succession planning, growth from organic channels or acquisition, or cultural changes in strategic direction, Andy brings his expertise to build the kind of foundation that supports a healthy organization. "You can't build a building from the top down any more than you can build a leader or a company. You have to start with a solid foundation to build and grow. That's really our focus at Xcellero. We're able to identify the key business and psychological drivers that create a base for healthy growth. When leaders grow, the business prospers."

Andy likes playing golf with his wife of more than 30 years, but as far as hobbies go he quips, "I'm not very good at that." Press a little deeper and you find a travel enthusiast (the only state he hasn't been to is Idaho), a prolific reader, a father of two, grandfather of four and an Arizona desert aficionado.

"Helping people to reach their greatest potential is beyond just a job for me. It's what I do and I love it. Whether serving on boards, working with nonprofits, or businesses, I will continue to do this for as long as I can. It's what I was meant to do."

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