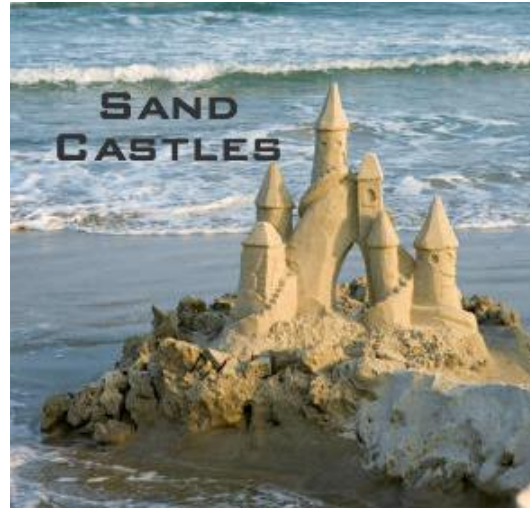


If you've ever watched children building a sand castle on the beach, you will see them run, laugh, jump, tussle, whisper secrets, and even yell at each other. Some are great communicators in an open setting; others prefer to work by themselves; some give directions; others like to sit back and watch; some like to "dive right in" while others want to consider if it's okay to take the plunge. When the tide rises, some will stand up and scream and others will just sit back and take it all in. Kids building sand castles are just that -- kids, being themselves by acting naturally. Eventually, kids grow up and the sand castles become careers. However, one fundamental



remains the same: people are different in so many ways. It is important to understand and value those differences -- whether building a sand castle, a career or a business. In adult life, we all need the "right" people in the "right" roles at the "right" time for an organization, a war-time effort, a philanthropic endeavor, or any activity to function well and perform at a high level. We also need to understand and value the diversity that is needed for such success. What is "right" for one sand castle builder may not be right for another, but when both work together constructively -- respecting their differences and combining their strengths -- the result is an impressive structure that can make a difference in the world.

When organizations are small, people need to be adaptable -- to bend and flow; digging the moat at the same time as raising the ramparts. As an organization grows, structure and process replace the "old way" of doing things. If people within the organization have not raised the bar for their own skill sets, the organization will fill the gap by hiring people who have what is needed. All too often, as we mature and age, the structure, rules and norms we have adopted along the way can block us from being who we really are or reaching our full potential. Just as conditions on a beach determine the "right" type of sand castle, conditions in a business will determine the "right" person in each role. The key is being able to adapt, while keeping those innate characteristics that make each of us unique. The challenge for the general contractors of sand castles is to respect and value differences, while blending them to create a structure that all can appreciate.

As the past year has played out, many things have changed. We appear to be entering a new paradigm in the world economy with new rules and dynamics. No matter where your organization is right now -- think back to that (now "grown up") child in you and make the decision that is, and always has been, the right one for *YOU*. Celebrate your uniqueness, but be open to change. Be aware of how the tide is turning, and adjust yourself for success. In the end, that inner "kid" really does know the right thing for you to do to grow, change, flourish and enjoy yourself whatever the circumstances!

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Use it as a time to renew, reflect and make commitments to your inner self--and continue to build and create new castles in the sand!

*Kathleen Frank, President*