

Meet Konrad

Konrad Knell is a leader in facilitating strategic planning and leadership development using creative, collaborative, and visual methods.

The first thing Konrad wanted to be when he grew up was a map-maker. He was too young to know the word “cartographer” -- but it was clear that the desire to visualize complex information was present very early in his life. He grew up in a suburb of Detroit, which is a great place to be from -- what they say about Midwestern values is true, and every place he’s lived since then seems wonderful!

Eventually, his analytical, scientific mind drove him to explore a career in medicine. He studied the sciences at Harvard, earning an A.B. Cum Laude in biology and psychology in 1984. His passion for visualization began to express through photography, often spending entire nights in the darkrooms of Harvard’s dorms. Ultimately, he was drawn to start his career in business because of its opportunities for creativity and working with people. His first job was at Comarco, a mid-sized technical services company. He quickly excelled as a marketer, then as a project manager of teams of software engineers. He loved the role of consultant, advisor, and coach to his clients, and decided that strategy consulting offered the career he was looking for: intellectually challenging, analytical, creative, and people-oriented. He hoped that somehow, someday it could include his passion for visualization.



He was off to Stanford to get an MBA, specializing in strategy and organizational development, and graduated in 1990. He then joined Strategic Decisions Group (SDG), which has an unusual business model of combining the highly analytic tools of decision analysis with group process and facilitation methods. He learned to facilitate the development of innovative business strategies and change programs in large companies in many diverse industries. He won key roles working on high-profile strategy projects at large global clients like Bristol-Myers Squibb, Boeing, Chevron, General Motors, Monsanto, Pfizer, Proctor & Gamble, and Sequent Computer Systems. He stayed at SDG for 10 years, becoming a Principal in the firm. While he loved strategy consulting and the depth of the tools and processes he was learning and using, he longed for something more.

Through his exploration of various models of group process and organizational development, he became passionate about helping groups work together more effectively and visualize their future. He also pursued his own path of personal development through meditation, presence-based inquiry, and several personality theories. He developed an interest in the connection between personal development and organizational effectiveness. The ideas of “organizational change starts with personal change” and “being the change you wish to see in the world” infused themselves in his work and fueled a passion for leadership development.

Konrad sought to pull these ideas together and help clients plan and lead organizations in new, more creative, visionary, collaborative, and personal ways. He established his own consulting and coaching firm in 2000, known as Konrad Knell Associates (renamed Blue Summit in 2006). He soon connected with The Grove Consultants International, teaming up with the group on projects and integrating their graphic facilitation tools and processes into his work. His passion for visualizing and visioning finally found fruition in his work and amplified the power of group collaboration in planning. He has facilitated projects with organizations like Adobe Systems, the California Highway Patrol, GE Medical Systems, Hewlett Packard, Levi Strauss, Microsoft, the National Park Service, and Swift Communications. He also works with numerous small businesses, non-profits, entrepreneurs, and individual leaders.

Konrad is based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He loves outdoor sports, travel, photography, yoga, and studying Eastern philosophy and Western psychology.