

I could tell with just a glance that his outfit was normally reserved for weddings and funerals. The collar was a bit frayed, and the slacks were a touch faded, but he wore it with pride. He stepped onto the elevator with me and gave a sigh of relief as the doors closed. I saw the new employee paperwork in his hand, and asked where he'd now be working. He looked directly into my eyes with a smile on his face and responded, "Janitorial." I congratulated him, the doors opened, and we went our separate ways. It was only a 20 second elevator ride, but it changed how I thought about my role as a trainer. My charge is not simply to dispense information, but to provide opportunities tailored to the needs of those who seek them.

All too often, we measure success merely in dollars and cents. Booker T. Washington once said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." As a Training Program Developer for Goodwill of Central Arizona, I am part of an organization whose mission is to put people to work. We do this by providing job training, education and employment services to individuals with barriers to employment.

In order to fulfill our mission of putting people to work, we partner with employers across the Valley, and these employers have told us that there's a significant need for skilled workers. Yet currently, more than 200,000 people are unemployed in Arizona. Goodwill recognizes this as an opportunity. By providing job seekers with the skills that employers require, we aim to close the gap between those looking for work, and those looking to hire.

Having a valid, reliable way to evaluate a candidate's readiness for work is critical to the success of our endeavors. We must be able to ensure that we are

adequately preparing job seekers for employment. More than 40,000 job seekers came to our Career Centers last year, and if awarded the opportunity to become Kirkpatrick Certified, I will utilize the model to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programs provided to those looking for work. I will also use it to evaluate the training of our more than 2,000 Goodwill of Central Arizona employees. We owe it to our clients, donors, and supporters to ensure that our training efforts are achieving optimal impact. In today's competitive workforce, it is more important than ever for job seekers to update their skills and continue their education. It is also more important than ever for us as trainers to raise our standards so that we can provide those we train with the best opportunities for continuous growth.

I'm excited about the possibility of using the Kirkpatrick Model to identify and improve the measurable results of our organization's training programs. The more effective we are, the more who will find meaningful employment. And the more Arizonans employed, the stronger our economy and our communities.

I begin this journey knowing full well it has no end. We will constantly strive to provide opportunities for those who are willing to put in the work. Nevertheless, every journey begins with a first step, and what inspires that step is different for everyone. For me, it was a 20 second elevator ride.