

INDUCTEE

MICHELE ABRAHAM

Graduated . . . 1972
Resides Columbia, SC

An exemplary scholar and able leader in high school, Michele was active in choir, drama, cheerleading, sport stats, as well as a leader in Student Council, National Honor Society, and Debate. She represented Gahanna Lincoln at Girls' State. Michele was class salutatorian in 1972 and three years later graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bowling Green State University with a BA in Communications.

Michele's first post-college position was with Eastman Kodak as a sales representative covering South Carolina and part of Georgia. During her two and a half years with Kodak, she more than doubled the sales and created novel promotions drawing unprecedented attendance at events. Since that time, Michele has made a name for herself as one who can guide companies to recognize their shortcomings and to work in unity through strategic planning achieving sustainable success.

At Owens Corning as a sales representative in Florida she increased sales by over 80% and led the company into its first classified defense program. Later at the home office, she managed three major markets and high performance product lines increasing sales by \$17 million. Next as Marketing/Business Development Manager at Atlantic Research Corp she guided her team to build an \$11 million advanced materials business, creating joint ventures with British Petroleum in England and others in the U.S. and opening a unique factory that produced metal matrix composite parts for McDonnell Douglas and General Electric.

Seven years later Michele was Vice President of Sales and Customer Service for a mid-sized manufacturer in California, steering efforts to win contracts with companies like Boeing, resulting in sizeable revenue and profit increases. Then after a five year period of running her own consulting business assisting clients with strategic growth strategies, she returned to Ohio. Michele worked for the Ohio Department of Development, guiding the organization to embrace a strategic planning and management process that focused everyone on common vision and goals. As State Director for Ohio Small Business Development Centers, Michele led the program to a top three national ranking.

Currently, Michele resides in Columbia, South Carolina where she serves as the State Director for the South Carolina Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) which just received full federal accreditation including four commendations for exemplary performance.

Larry J. Stevens, one of four Regional Directors of the SBDC, credits Michele with their success. "Prior to Michele becoming our State Director, our Centers were totally fragmented and...didn't share many best practices between them. We operated in four separate silos with very little, if any, communication amongst the four Regions. Since Michele's arrival, the fragmentation and separate silos have totally disappeared. She now has us operating as one totally unified State,.... accomplished in only a few short years. As a young Regional Director, Michele has really taught me a great deal. She has aided in my maturation as a Director every step of the way. She came into the organization placing high expectations on each Regional Director. Even though many of the expectations were lofty, Michele was very strategic in her leadership, which made these lofty goals 100% achievable."

It takes special skills to bring together autonomous groups to create common goals and methods of achieving them. Obviously Michele has these skills and uses them successfully in all that she does. John W. Goodwin, Regional Director of Orangeburg Area SBDC in South Carolina, speaks well of Michele saying, "She implemented rebranding of the SBDC's that raised the level of awareness in the business community. She exemplifies high integrity in her actions, shows dedication, and gives attention to detail. She is an excellent leader and she demonstrates outstanding professional business demeanor. She has a cheerful personality that makes her an absolute joy to be around and a natural when it comes to working with members of the staff."