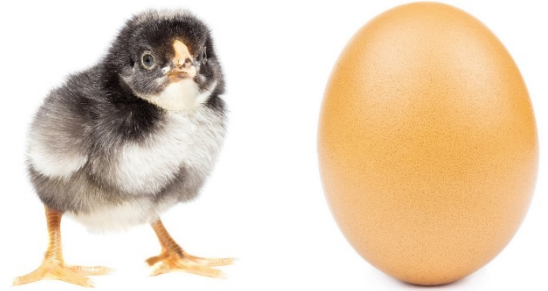




## Issue 193 - April 2019

Which came first; the chicken or the egg? That's the age-old question of cause and effect. It's often difficult to know which is which. For example, do caring families create members who feel loved or do loving members create caring families? Is he unhappy because he's ungrateful or is he ungrateful because he's unhappy?



Do my punny Dad Jokes pull a groan muscle because they're the lowest form of humor or are they the lowest form of humor just for the pun of it? Well, OK. Maybe that

example doesn't quite make the point, but I do sometimes ponder the cause when I see my effect. And nobody wants to egg me on. cause when I see my effect. And nobody wants to egg me on.

This issue features updates on my latest book project. This "readersourcing" approach revolves around very thoughtful and enormously useful input from over 600 readers on today's most relevant development topics. I've love to get your advice and guidance. Please click the links in this issue to view four outlines of possible books, rank order them, and give me your feedback on what is and isn't important. I'd also love for you to join our Book Advisory Panel -- and I am not above offering a little "payola" to reward your help!

As you'll read below, the four highest voted topics are Communication, Coaching, Culture Change, and Leading Change. Which comes first? Which causes which?

- Does an organization's culture create strong leaders or do strong leaders create an organization's culture.
- Is effective coaching a key skill of great leaders or are great leaders highly effective coaches?
- Does it take change leadership skills to shift a team/organization's culture or do successful culture shifts develop change leadership skills?
- Are strong leaders highly effective communicators or are highly effective communicators strong leaders?

The second article in this issue could raise another chicken and egg question: do innovative and agile cultures create highly-trusted and engaged people or do highly-trusted and engaged people create innovative and agile cultures? You decide once you've read about this new research from Great Place to Work.

In all these examples there are convincing arguments for either cause or effect. Perhaps it depends on which you think is the chicken and which is the egg. Which circles us right back to which came first. 19th-century British novelist and satirist, Samuel Butler, decided that "a hen is only an egg's way of making another egg."

However you look at these topics, they're vital to personal, team, and organization effectiveness.

Eggzactly.

## Readers as Leaders in My New Book Development

In the fall of 2017, I began a book development project by reviewing over ten years of blogs, research, and our workshop/retreat topics to identify core themes and topics most relevant in these turbulent times. Eight major topic areas emerged.



In the spring of 2018, I asked readers to [Help Us Distill Today's Vital Leadership/Organization Development Topics](#). As part of a "readersourcing" project, we invited senior executives, managers, and HR/development professionals to [rank order](#)

[the eight topic areas](#) (with descriptive sub-sections). Nearly 500 people completed the survey.

This ["readersourcing" feedback identified the four highest voted areas](#). These were Increasing Communication, Coaching, Culture Change, and Leading Change. Readers then completed an [in-depth survey on the four top topics](#). Many also joined my Book Advisory Panel ([click here](#) if you'd like to join the panel).

Over 100 panel members provided rich, deep, and thoughtful comments and suggestions on the four topics. Reading through this trove of insights and experiences yielded lots of ideas and paths for further research and chapter topics.

It took me longer than I'd planned to scope out the four topic areas with the following outlines. I'd like to think that's because quality takes time. But maybe I am just slow. Our delightful grandkids (it's not fair that we have the cutest and smartest grandkids the world has ever seen) also provide many wonderful distractions.

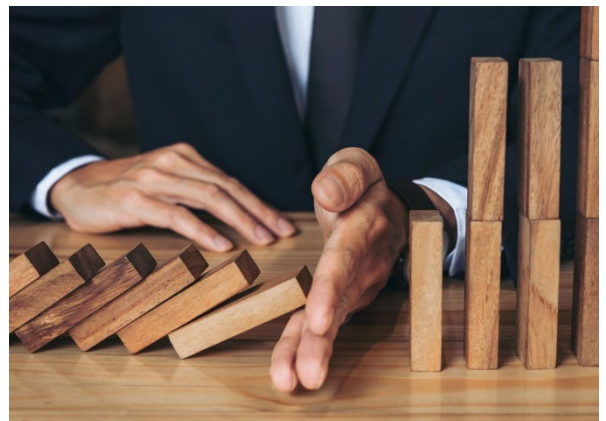
### Would you like to be a Reader Leader?

Peter Drucker once said, "nothing is so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all." I'd love to get your help as a Reader Leader in countering my inefficiency with greater effectiveness. Your "readersourcing" input boosts the odds that I'll end up with a more useful book or books. [Take part in the survey now.](#)

## This One Culture Factor Leads to 5.5 Times Higher Growth

Are your own people your biggest barrier to higher innovation and agility? That's what recent research from Great Place to Work found in a study of 792 companies totaling about 500,000 employees.

In this new study, [Innovation by All](#), Great Place to Work concluded organizations with high-trust cultures involve and engage many more employees than most organizations in the innovation process. These companies are much more agile and become masters rather than victims of change.



The study notes that discussions of innovation today focus on technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain tools, and automation. But "many leaders today are failing to fully tap their human potential, which paradoxically has increased even as machines have become more central to business."

"Innovation by All (IA) maximizes a company's human potential by tapping into the intelligence, skills, and passion of everyone in the organization. IA cultures "generate more high-quality ideas, realize greater speed in implementation, and achieve greater agility-- resulting in 5.5 times the revenue growth of peers with a less inclusive approach to innovation."

Here are a few study highlights:

- Innovation is now as much about agility as invention.
- Leaders need more speed with changing internal systems, launching new products, and responding to rapidly changing markets.
- Human judgement is vital to quickly capitalizing on new technologies. Front-line employees are central to that acceleration.
- The fastest, most nimble organizations have a ratio of 11:2 -- eleven employees pulling the organization forward for every two dragging on growth and agility. Functional organizations' ratio is 5:2 while the slowest and worst performing organizations are 3:2.
- IA organizations rapidly adapt to disruptive change, quickly create new approaches, and generate high-quality ideas.
- These highly accelerated organizations have "21% higher levels of discretionary effort, 14% less risk of turnover, 32% improved productivity, and 33% more adaptability."
- Employees at IA organizations consider their leaders highly genuine and caring. Trust and autonomy are also much higher than in peer organizations. These leaders set inspiring visions and live by shared core values.
- People in the best IA organizations report significantly higher levels of looking forward to coming to work, adapting quickly to changes needed for the organization's success, and recommending their organization as a great place to work.

An employee at one of the highly innovative organizations in the study said, "If another company were to come in, offer me three times more than what I'm making today, I couldn't leave because I know if I went there, I wouldn't have this," he says. "I'd be throwing away this foundation that I built here, and the whole company has this."

How innovative is your organization? Is your leadership boosting or blocking agility? How do you know?

### ***Related Links***

- [Has Your Culture Created A Great Place to Work for All?](#)
- [Great Places to Work Reflect Great Cultures = Great Results](#)
- [Five Steps to a High-Performance Culture](#)
- [Growing Leaders at All Levels Even More Critical Today](#)

## I'd Love Your Input on my New Book

Which development topics are your top priorities today; communication, coaching, culture change, or leading change? Perhaps your answer is yes; all of them?

As described above, I've been working on a book development project for the past 18 months. It started with eight development topic areas. After readers ranked ordered those, we ended up with those four topics. Readers then provided thoughtful and rich insights into each area. That input complemented my deep dive into decades of workshops/retreats, blogs, books, and my research database.



So, let's make this a win/win. I'll give you the key findings for each topic area. You can use these to guide your personal, team, or organization development. The "fee" I ask in return is **you help me make up my mind**; are these four separate books, two combined books, or one book? And what's your ranked priority for these four topics?

### Key Development Topics and Findings

#### Increasing Communication

Communications is a way too-broad term that's a symptom carrier for many leadership and organizational issues. Technology is badly confusing information and communication.

- Trust makes or breaks leadership effectiveness.
- Courageous conversations are vital and often avoided.
- Transparency and openness are nurtured by facts and data.
- Leaders communicate loudest with behavior.
- Authentic leadership synchronizes the audio with the video.
- Faulty feedback loops lead to misunderstanding and communication breakdowns.
- Listening, understanding, and conflict resolution boost communication effectiveness.
- Weak communication skills are a major cause of leadership ineffectiveness.

#### Coaching

Coaching is a core element of highly effective leadership. Strong coaching skills transform good managers into great leaders.

- Research clearly shows that coaching dramatically multiplies or minimizes results and growth.
- Leaders often fall into predictable and avoidable coaching traps.
- Crazy busy leaders "snoopervise" and own the issue rather than developing others.
- A strong coaching framework guides leaders to much higher effectiveness.
- Succession planning and career coaching are powerful combinations.
- Performance coaching discussions raise or reduce effectiveness.
- Feedback is highly destructive or extremely constructive depending on the delivery.
- Leveraging strengths can overshadow weaknesses and multiply effectiveness.

## Culture Change

Culture is multi-layered. An organization has a macro-culture with many micro-cultures. Leaders can significantly shift their team or organization's culture by applying leverage in the right places.

- Research shows that culture is the critical X factor that boosts or blocks results.
- 70% of culture change efforts fail. Using proven frameworks and practices drop failure rates.
- Culture ripples out from the leadership team.
- Central culture questions: Where are you going? What do you believe in? Why do you exit?
- Customer-centered cultures serve the servers.
- High-performing cultures don't let the urgent crowd out the important.
- Measurement and feedback can be powerful development tools or dispiriting whacking sticks.
- Structures, processes, and systems limit or liberate performance.
- Learning and development are vital to a high-performance culture.
- An implementation map makes or breaks sustained culture development.

## Leading Change

We need to develop leaders at all levels to increase their personal change and adaptability while they help others do the same.

- Leadership is an action, not a position. It's what we do, not our role that makes us a leader.
- Changing mindsets and mental models is key to inspiring people to thrive on change.
- If the rate of external change exceeds the rate of internal change, we'll end up being changed.
- Critical choices are to lead, follow, or wallow when faced with difficult changes.
- The new science of positive psychology shows how to deal with challenging changes.
- Hardiness and resilience can be developed and strengthened.
- Strong leaders practice upward leadership to manage their manager.
- We can soar or sink on the winds of constant change depending on our approach.
- Teams and organizations built to change can quickly adjust when the shift hits the plan.

How are you, your team, or your organization doing on these key topics? Which ones are the most important to you?

I'd sure appreciate your advice on my new book project. How many books and what's their ranked priority? [Click here](#) to read the outlines and answer whatever questions you have the time or inclination to answer.

You're welcome and thank you!

## Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles



This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure. You can follow me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>

My original tweet commenting on the article follows each title and descriptor from the original source:

Pulling is a much more effective leadership approach to building a strong culture.  
[Stop Pushing a Coaching Culture](#), Complimentary Zenger Folkman webinar

The good news is that fatal flaws can be fixed.

[6 Fatal Flaws That Kill A Leader's Effectiveness](#), Jack Zenger, *Forbes*

New research showing eight common ways to lose trust and how to regain it.

[Your Boss Doesn't Trust You: What Went Wrong](#), Joe Folkman, *Forbes*

## Read *The Leader Letter* in Weekly Installments



The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my weekly [blog](#) during the previous month.

If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published over twelve months, you'll have read the equivalent of a leadership book. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

## Feedback and Follow-Up

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at [Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com) or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or my [blog](#)!

Live, learn, laugh, and lead -- just for the L of



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