



The CLEMMER Group

Stronger People. Stronger Organizations.

Jim Clemmer's **Leader Letter**

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During a break in a recent leadership development workshop, I talked with the HR Director (let's call him Rich) about all the work they were putting into revamping the organization's promotion and performance management system. Rich said they were basing their promotion process on their performance appraisal and rating system. Their big problem is getting managers to complete performance appraisals. They planned to push harder and provide some training. This, despite growing evidence that **performance appraisals are being abandoned** by most companies because they don't work.

Rich's company was doing nothing about changing their culture. They were doing the same thing but expecting different results. In a classic case of 'do-what-I-say and not what I do,' Rich said he's been there three years and never had a performance review. And Rich was failing his executive team by not providing **strategic HR leadership**.

I had this conversation just after returning from Zenger Folkman's international partner conference in Utah last month. Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman spoke about the updated research detailed in their new book, *The New Extraordinary Leader*. Having just finished the book, Zenger Folkman's new section on key organizational factors in building leadership capacity came to mind in talking with Rich. One of those chapters, "Embed Leadership Development in the Culture," rang especially true to our conversation. We can dip leaders in a development event, but if what's expected and rewarded back on their job hasn't changed, neither will participant

behavior. Doing the same thing, but expecting different results...

Most leadership development efforts should be accompanied by a giant flushing sound. They suck time and money down the drain. Jack and Joe cite a McKinsey study showing the depth of the problem:

"When upward of 500 executives were asked to rank their top three human-capital priorities, leadership development was included as both a current and a future priority. Almost two-thirds of the respondents identified leadership development as their number-one concern. Only 7 percent of senior managers polled by a UK business school think that their companies develop global leaders effectively, and around 30 percent of US companies admit that they have failed to exploit their international business opportunities fully because they lack enough leaders with the right capabilities."

High-performing organizations get dramatically better returns from their development investment. *The New Extraordinary Leader* reinforces key steps proven to maximize return on development. These include tailoring development to the organization, hitting critical mass by developing the majority of leaders at all levels, ensuring active executive role modeling and support, using learning methods based on evidence for behavior change, developing organizational culture and leadership skills in lock-step, and building a robust process to follow through and sustain development efforts.

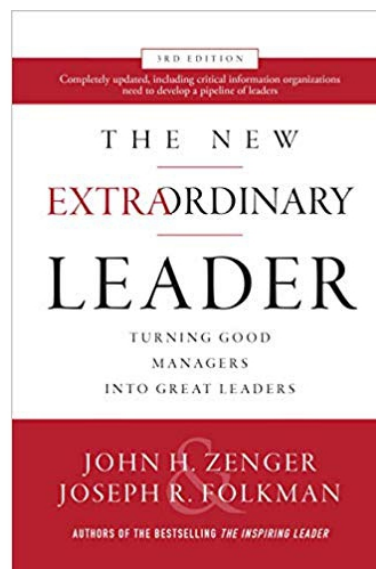
This issue features background on, and a review of, *The New Extraordinary Leader*. This new work includes three new leadership competencies and fresh insights emerging from Zenger Folkman's updated research.

You'll also read about the communication confusion trapping many managers and nine ways to increase communication effectiveness. As Jack and Joe explain from their research,

"leadership is about behavior, and the lion's share of behavior is centered on communication via word and action...an extremely important part of communication involves the leader's ability to ask questions and intently listen to the answers...it becomes clear that 'catch' is more important than 'pitch.'"

Hope you catch a few key leadership nuggets to keep you growing.

Review of *The New Extraordinary Leader*



Almost 20 years ago Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman began a two-year research project to review 360 assessments on over 20,000 leaders. They sought to pinpoint the leadership competencies differentiating the top 10 percent of leaders from the bottom 10 percent of leaders. Jack and Joe correlated assessments of the best and worst leaders against organizational results such as employee engagement, retention, quality, productivity, safety, customer satisfaction, sales, and profitability. From dozens of leadership competencies, they found 16 that reliably predicted those outcomes. The first edition of their book, *The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders*, published in 2002, formed the foundation for a unique 360 strengths-based assessment and development **process**.

After seven years of work with leading global companies using their counterintuitive approaches, Jack and Joe updated their book in with a second edition in 2009. This edition featured **20 key insights** on leadership development.

In 2012 Jack and Joe continued to update their work and condensed key learning and applications in their book, ***How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths***. That was the same year Jack and I reconnected and **renewed an old partnership**.

Last month, McGraw Hill published Jack and Joe's latest update in a third edition to this ongoing work. ***The New Extraordinary Leader*** reaffirms previous research and draws new lessons from a database now over five times bigger than the original; 1,500,000 questionnaires by direct reports, peers, bosses assessing over 121,000 leaders.

Some of the original 16 competencies are revised and reworded. However, their impact on results continues to reliably correlate to organizational outcomes. Three new competencies emerged; making decisions, risk-taking, and valuing diversity. As before, research shows that a leader doesn't have to be great at 19 competencies. **Top performance in 4 to 5 competencies** elevates leadership performance to the top 10 percent of leaders delivering outstanding results. **Cross-training** to leverage strengths is the fulcrum.

Here are the additional insights emerging from Zenger Folkman's latest research:

- Leaders must take responsibility for their own development
- The organization can provide significant assistance in developing leadership
- Organizations are waiting far too long to begin developing leadership skills
- Leadership is needed and occurs at all levels throughout the organization
- Optimum leadership behavior is remarkably similar at all levels of an organization
- Filling an organization's leadership pipeline demands scale
- Leadership effectiveness is highly contagious
- Leadership effectiveness in an organization seldom exceeds that of the person at the top
- Effective leadership requires integration with regular job duties
- One key to effective development is frequent and sustained long-term sustainment activities
- Women are better leaders than men
- Effective leadership development demands measurement
- The medium by which leadership is practiced is communication

Bestselling leadership author, Jim Kouzes, "fell in love on page one" with *The New Extraordinary Leader* because it attacks unsupportable assumptions about leadership through exceptional research. It's not "a hackneyed rehashing of tired nostrums." Executive coach and best-selling author, Marshall Goldsmith says the book goes beyond anecdotes or war stories to build on comprehensive research and is "destined to be a classic in our field."

The solid, **evidence-based** approach behind all the extraordinary leader books and development approaches, and their strength-based process are major reasons The CLEMMER Group partnered with Zenger Folkman. *The New Extraordinary Leader* updates that research and brings practical, how-to applications to boosting leadership effectiveness.

Jack and Joe discuss their new book in a webinar on December 4. There's no charge to join. **Click here** for details and registration. **Here** you can also learn about the only public workshop of *The New Extraordinary Leader* we've scheduled for 2020.

Communication Confusion: Have You Fallen in This Common Trap?



Does your organization need to improve communications? Would you like to get more e-mails?

Almost every hand goes up when I ask that first question in a workshop. Rarely do any hands go up when I ask the second question. But what do most managers do when they hear people in their organization want more communication? They send more e-mails.

German sociologist, Hartmut Rosa, **calculates** that since pre-modern times, communications have increased by a factor of ten million times and information transmission by ten billion.

It's not clear how Rosa delineates information and communication. There is a crucial difference between them. Many managers confuse the two.

We're drowning in information while thirsting for communication. As with **management and leadership**, we need both.

Information	→	Communication
Speaks to the head	→	Engages the heart
Monologue	→	Dialog
Facts and Results	→	Stories and Values
Mostly written	→	Mostly verbal
Quantity	→	Quality
Provides updates	→	Builds communion

From their research with people in more than 100 companies, Harvard professor, Boris Groysberg, and communications consultant, Michael Slind's declare that **Leadership is a Conversation**. "Traditional corporate communication must give way to a process that is more dynamic and more sophisticated. Most important, that process must be *conversational* (their emphasis)." Managers talk at people; leaders talk with people.

When you're talking with a friend or family member, you're engaged in a two-way discussion. You're giving and getting perspectives, perceptions, and feelings. You're projecting your emotions while reading and reacting to their emotions. Your conversation ebbs and flows.

E-mails or texts can be wonderfully efficient and extremely useful. They're great information tools. Sometimes they enhance discussions and foster conversations. But often they hurt rather than help with reading emotions and making heart to heart connections. It's very hard to sense intentions, empathize, or reach a mutual understanding to build trust, deepen learning, and strengthen bonds.

Overwhelmed and overloaded managers need to get much more strategic with information and communications. Rather than cramming more information into a slide deck or sending more e-mails, effective leaders cut through the information torrent to talk with people. Listening and learning is as important -- perhaps even more so for engagement and trust-building -- as telling and selling.

How's your communication-information balance? Do you need to do less informing and more communicating?

9 Ways to Increase Communication at Work



Bob was clearly frustrated. "I keep telling them, but nobody listens," he fumed. As we looked at his 360 feedback on his communication practices, it was clear why nobody was listening to him. Bob's communication skills were awful.

Bob scored quite high on technical expertise and analytical skills. A big part of his communications problem was that Bob believed logical arguments were all he needed. But his analytical approach often created an emotional tone that felt cold and uncaring. His feedback showed Bob often didn't try to learn from others or understand their point of view.

Many leaders like Bob over-inform and under-communicate. They're drowning people in information who are thirsting for communication.

Communion and communication share the same roots. Oxford dictionary defines communion as "the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially on a mental or spiritual level." This deeper connection is what people are craving today in **workplaces with a higher purpose**.

Here are some ways you can increase communion through improved communication at work:

1. Strong communication balances listening and learning with persuading and influencing. Find the common ground that will produce a win/win outcome.
2. Communication is an ongoing, two-way process, not just a few interactions. That involves seeking to understand, and learning from each other.
3. Everyone's tuned into radio station WIFM (What's in it for me). Try to understand their interests and how they will win.
4. Balance logic and emotion. Powerful persuasion is "logic on fire." Strong communicators use well-constructed arguments that connect emotionally through examples, stories, metaphors, or analogies.
5. E-mail is great for the head part, informing and managing. The heart part -- communicating and leading -- takes personal contact.
6. Build alliances, networks, and coalitions for long-term change. This often means waiting for the right time or the right people to move change agendas forward.
7. Be politically savvy. Understand the dynamics of your team/organization culture. Listen, learn, and leverage key influencers.
8. Communion won't happen without trust. Trust is the currency of communication. You can only write checks on what's in your trust account. Your account balance depends on keeping your commitments, your performance track record, consistency with declared values, your authenticity, and demonstrated respectfulness.

9. Lighten up. Use humor to build rapport and connect with people. Studies show the most effective leaders use humor two to three times more often than their less effective (and jest-lagged) counterparts.

In a study of over 2,400 leaders, Zenger Folkman looked at their skills in asking good questions, listening well, and telling or sharing information. Their direct reports rated how well they felt their leader communicated with them. Those leaders who didn't practice any of these three skills were rated below average in communications. If the leader practiced one skill, their direct reports rated them as slightly better than average in communications. If the leader was skilled in all three, they were rated near the top quartile in communications. Zenger Folkman concluded, "Effective communication is about more than simply giving a good speech. Great communication that both informs and persuades is a two-way conversation where leaders ask good questions and take the time to listen carefully."

How's your communication working? Are you informing or communicating? How do you know?

Further Reading

- Influence Index (quiz)
- So, You Think You're a Good Listener (research) and Thoughts That Make You Go Hmm...on Listening.
- Listening and Speaking: The Leader's Paradox
- Communication Breakdowns: Open Door and Closed Mind
- Silence Kills: Are You Fostering Cowardly Communication?

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>

and connect with me on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimclemmer>

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

Hear Jack and Joe outline new competencies and fresh insights from their latest research studies of over 125,000 leaders.

Webinar: The New Extraordinary Leader with Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman

"Complimentary webinar sharing lessons learned from over 15 years of helping organizations boost leadership performance."

Great visionary leadership lessons on branding, inspiring, and energizing in this hyper-communication era.

3 Executive-Branding Lessons We Can Learn from Elon Musk, Alp Mimaroglu, *Entrepreneur*

"Like him or not, the polarizing founder of Tesla and SpaceX has successfully demonstrated transformational leadership."

360 assessment data showing which is the most effective leader. Which one are you?

Are You an Office Peacemaker or a Provocateur? Joe Folkman, *Forbes*

"If one of the skills is above average and the other is below average, then you are destined to be an average leader."

Small sample of the steady progress and quiet trends that aren't dramatic news headlines or click bait.

One month of Beautiful News in one image

"Amazing things are happening in the world, thanks to human ingenuity, endeavour and collaboration."

Great advice for dealing with all the negative news and information overload.

The Information Diet -- Future Crunch, Angus, Hervey

"As our access to information has exploded, our relationship to it has changed. When information was scarce, its value lay in its ability to influence action. Now that it's lightweight and abundant, we act on less and less of it."

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 or connect with me on **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, **Facebook**, or my **blog**!

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



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